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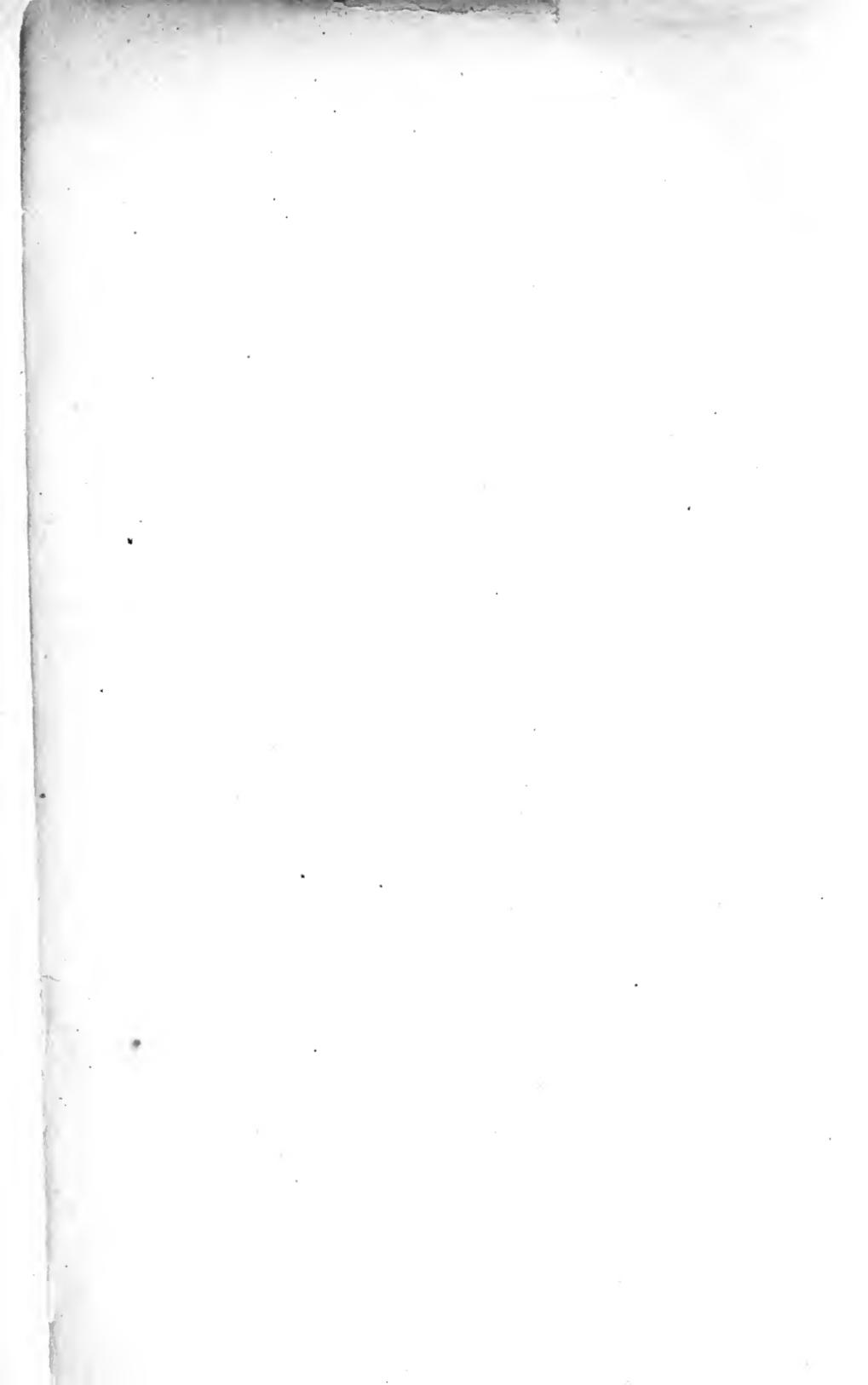
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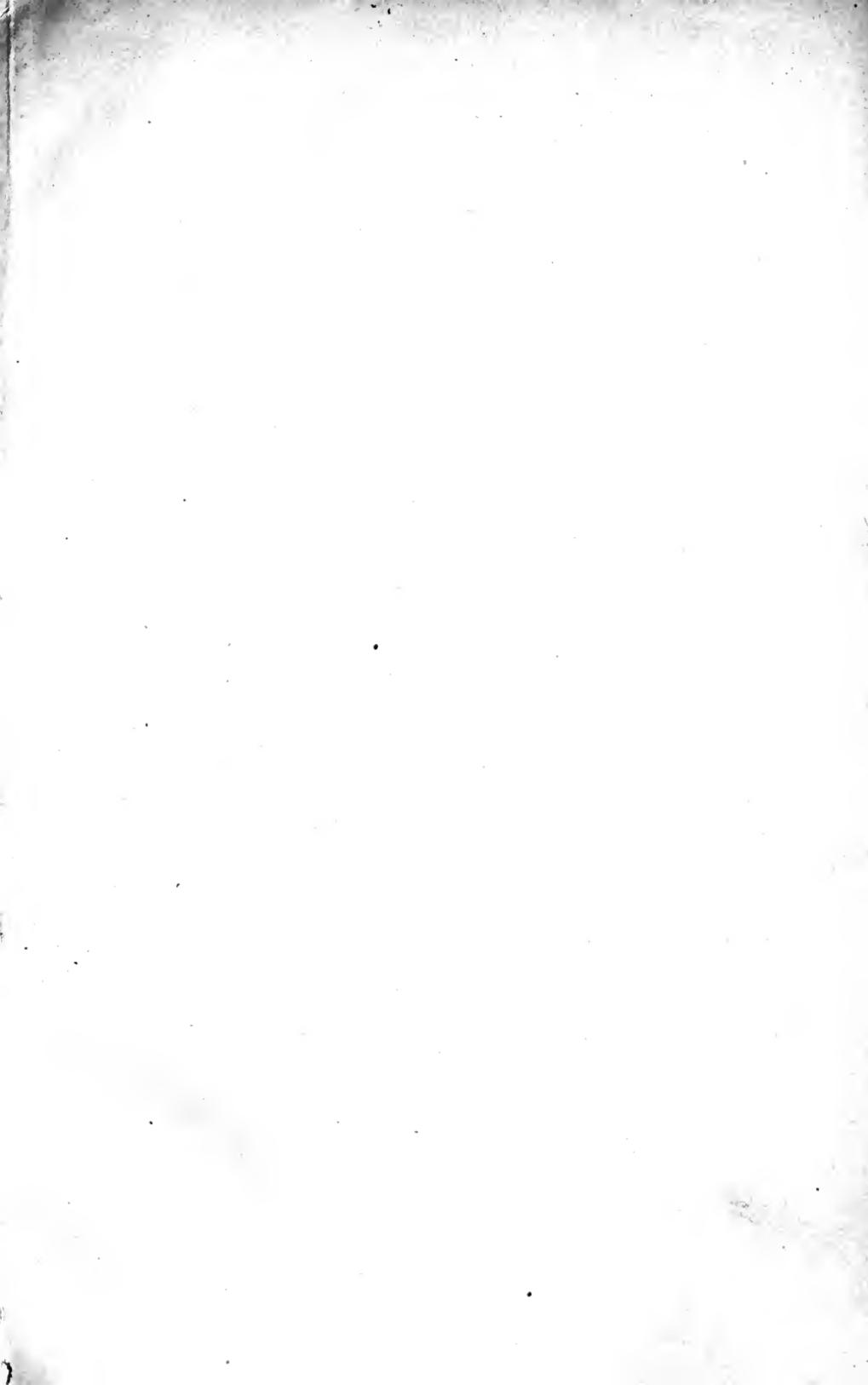
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A STUDY

IN THE

History of the Eucharist.

BY

JAMES THOMSON SHOTWELL.

*Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Ph.D. at Columbia University.*



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PREFACE.

THIS study was begun in 1900. It is part of a larger survey which has been undertaken with the aim of presenting the history of the sacraments in their practical bearings upon mediæval society. A preliminary study of the period of the scholastics was made in the seminar of Professor Robinson. But the difficulty of basing the mediæval history upon any existing treatment of the earlier period made it necessary to undertake an independent study of the origins,—the existence of an immense amount of controversial and unhistorical literature upon the subject being rather a hindrance than a help to the historical student. The chapters which follow were prepared in the autumn of 1902, as a thesis for the degree of Ph.D. Publication was delayed in order to incorporate them in the complete history. The latter has, however, developed along different lines, and it has seemed best to have the thesis printed in its original form.

For its kind indulgence in the face of these long delays the writer desires to express his gratitude to the Faculty of Political Science.

LONDON, 1905.

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A STUDY
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HISTORY OF THE EUCHARIST.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE present study is not concerned with theological speculation, but with the examination of historical phenomena. It attempts to explain the rise of an institution which has had an influence upon the history of Europe hardly less vast than that of those greatest products of the antique world, Greek art or Roman law. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper not only was the main factor in determining the constitution of the Christian church, but it has for over a thousand years deeply affected the art, literature, philosophy, economics and politics of Western civilisation.

It determined the constitution of the church through the rise of the order of priesthood and the elevation of the episcopacy. The first bishop's throne was a chair at the Lord's table, and his first jurisdiction was the administration of the sacrament and the oversight of the participants. The papacy itself and the whole hierarchy of the church have their origin here. The financial concerns of the church began in the eucharistic offerings ; its discipline grew out of the regulation of attendance. The control of the sacraments became the basis of the claim to control salvation, which gave all the terrors of excommunication. It made possible interdict and crusades, the humiliation of Henry IV., and the sway of Innocent III., the most powerful monarch of the middle ages.

In the political world, it was this control of the sacraments which enabled the church to take over the task of Rome. Its enactments against sin and evil would have remained mere moral censures, mere rhetorical denunciations, if it had not been able to attach a penalty to them. That penalty was exclusion from the sacraments, graded into a penitential system. Penance was no idle form. Sackcloth and ashes for five, ten or twenty years was not too great a price to pay for one last dying communion with the church. As the framework of the political world loosened, and the old obedience to Rome was replaced by the untamed instincts of the barbarians, it was the penitential system that substituted for the primitive German sense of right and wrong the ethics of Moses ; and it was by the great miracle of the mass that the German mind was subdued to accept such an authority. The first conception of Christianity which the conquering Franks received was that of a religion of the altars of Christ, a religion of miraculous potency. The forces of civilisation that penetrated Germany at the beck of Charlemagne were concentrated in the altars of the mission churches. Each altar that was set up contained the relics of saints, or the most precious relic of all, the wafer that had become the body of the Lord. And as thus every altar became a shrine, it was there the awed followers of Woden saw miracles that awakened more dread than the merciless capitularies of Charles. In the anarchy that followed the fall of the Carolingians, the penitential system almost alone made for order by the punishment of sin in an age that could not assure the punishment of crime. In the absence of a state, the church protected and policed society by enactments that carried with them not only the exclusion from the sacraments, but ostracism and the ban of the world. In a sense, the very basis of Christendom was the sacrament that made excommunication possible. Nor were the effects of the Lord's Supper upon political history all indirect. It will suffice to recall that the downfall of Bohemia was due to the denial of the cup.

The social and economic influences were not less noteworthy. Masses for the dead alone absorbed a vast amount of the wealth of Europe. Foundations were created for this one purpose ; and chapels were erected and priests employed for centuries with no other duties than to celebrate the eucharistic

sacrament for the benefit of the soul of the founder. Fraternities were formed for the mutual assurance of benefit from the masses that led from purgatory to heaven. Votive masses for the common affairs of daily life brought in their regular stipends distinct from offerings and tithes. It would be impossible to form any conception of, much less to estimate, the wealth that flowed into the church for the purpose of securing Divine favour through the sacraments.

Public education was fostered that the people might be able to understand the mass.¹ The first public school teachers of the Middle Ages were the parish priests who taught the peasant children the creed and the responses. In philosophy the conceptions of a miraculous universe were strengthened as theology was codified in harmony with popular belief.² In literature the one theme of romance outside of war and love was the search for the grail. In art the illumination of missals and the decoration of altars³ is a small thing compared with the fact that the very structure of the churches, the architecture itself, was determined by the early manner of celebration of the Lord's Supper.⁴ The table about which the little circle sat at first was restricted for the few as the membership increased, and then became an altar for the one. The simple Roman dwelling transformed its atrium, alæ and tablinum into the nave, transept and choir of the mediæval cathedral. The gorgeous spectacle of the mass succeeded to the simple communion of the earliest days, and the few possessions for the primitive ceremony grew into the splendid equipment of the richest altars in Europe.

But of all this there are only a few hints in the simplicity of the early customs which form the subject of the first part of this study. Its aim is to trace through the obscurity of the primitive conditions the rise and development of the institution which played so great a part in later history. Those con-

¹ Cf. Charlemagne's Capitulary, *De Litteris Colendis*.

² Cf. H. Reuter, *Die Aufklärung des Mittelalters*, on the opponents of Berengar. Lanfranc prefers to be with the common Catholic people without authorities to support him, rather than with Berengar, though supported by authorities (Vol. I., p. 92).

³ Cf. The monumental work of Fleury, *Iconographie de la Messe*.

⁴ Cf. Chapter v.

ditions were so different from the environment with which we ordinarily associate it as to demand a preliminary survey of the field itself.

When the short companionship of Christ and his disciples was so suddenly ended, it seemed at first as if the little group had been left without any guidance and were facing the world alone with nothing but a heritage of memories. But although personal contact with Jesus was no longer possible, they were comforted by the consciousness of the presence of the Spirit which he had promised. This was, however, no abstract or vaguely apprehended power. Its presence was as real as that of Christ had been.¹ It directed the actions of men by promptings and commands.² Apostles and prophets were but the medium for its expression, and it made their words the oracles of God. The power of miracle made manifest its divine nature; trance and the gift of tongues bore witness to its reality.

The further one reads the history of early Christianity the more one begins to feel that there were tendencies in it which were drawing it away from the founder, towards a society of the Holy Spirit. Even for Paul the mark of a Christian to distinguish him from other men was the indwelling of the Spirit.³ Whether that Spirit were the Spirit of Christ or a third person in a divine Trinity,⁴ its active daily guidance must tend to make less necessary a close contact with a historic Jesus. The adoptionist conception of the Christ as but a man in whom the Spirit had dwelt undefiled, bore in the same direction.⁵ Adoptionism placed the emphasis not upon a miraculous birth,

¹ Cf. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, I., p. 197.

² Cf. Acts xv., 28. "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and ourselves," and other references in Harnack, I., p. 166, n. 64.

³ Cf. Acts xix., 2-8. McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 509.

⁴ For a short summary cf. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, I., pp. 50, note, and 53, note. On the unfolding of the idea of the Trinity, cf. *ibid.*, I., pp. 80 and 157. Cf. also, Justin, *Apol.* I., 32. "The first power after God the Father . . . is the Word who is also the Son." Ignatius, *Eph.* ix., "The Holy Spirit speaketh not his own things but those of Christ." *Magn.* xv. "The Inseparable Spirit who is Jesus Christ."

⁵ Cf. Harnack, I., p. 191, for references. Docetism was a similar danger. Cf. Ignat., *Smyrn.* 7, where those who did not believe in the resurrection of Christ's body abstained from the Eucharist.

but upon the descent of the Holy Spirit at the baptism in the Jordan. And to this day the Eastern Church celebrates the commemoration of this event—the festival of the Epiphany—with greater pomp than that of the birth of Christ.¹

The environment of the early church was not unfavourable to the acceptance of a church of the Holy Spirit. Jewish philosophy in Alexandria had in Philo proclaimed principles of religious thought in harmony with such conceptions. Beyond the power of reason, unapproachable by intellectual effort, the Deific presence could be attained in ecstasy alone. Though the sources of Neo-Platonism are far enough removed from those of Palestinian Christianity, and no early influences of the former are discernible upon the latter,² yet the tendencies in Christianity which we have just noticed, if unchecked by others, would have thrown it along the lines of its arch enemy, Neo-Platonic philosophy. Even as it was, we shall see how narrowly it escaped, and what strength the heresies acquired which did follow along these lines.

But there were forces at work which prevented Christianity from thus losing sight of Christ, forces which gained in power as time went on. Instead of ignoring the life of its founder, the church drew closer to it, and treasured it the more. The guidance of the Spirit gave place once more to the guidance of the historic Jesus. Communion with Christ at the altar

¹ Adoptionism, according to Harnack, “is the Christology which is most in keeping with the self-witness of Jesus,—the Son as the chosen servant of God” (p. 198). By the early Christians, “Jesus was either regarded as the man whom God had chosen, in whom the Deity or the Spirit of God dwelt, and who, after being tested, was adopted by God and invested with dominion (adoption Christology). [Cf. especially the *Shepherd of Hermas*.] Or Jesus was regarded as a heavenly spiritual being (the highest after God), who took flesh and again returned to heaven after the completion of his work on earth (pneumatic Christology). [Cf. Paul, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, and John.] These two Christologies, which are, strictly speaking, mutually exclusive—the man who has become a God, and the Divine being who has appeared in human form—yet came very near each other when the Spirit of God implanted in the man Jesus was conceived of as the pre-existent Son of God, and when, on the other hand, the title Son of God, for that pneumatic being, was derived only from the miraculous generation in the flesh” (p. 190 f.).

² Harnack, *History of Dogma*, I., p. 113. On the other hand, see even the Ignatian Epistles (e.g., *Trall.*, V.). Cf. also P. Gardner, *Exploratio Evangelica*, chap. xxvii.

replaced that by spell and prophecy. The Catholic church was established.

This marks what might be called a second state in the history of Christianity. But it must not be imagined that the change brought in phenomena altogether new. It was a change in aspect, and in tendencies, but at least at first this was due to a transfer of emphasis rather than to the introduction of foreign influences. The element which was most prominent in the early church, the element of profound enthusiastic, extravagant spirituality merely subsided, and then the other elements stand out which had been less prominent.¹ The fluid enthusiasm of the early days subsided as the years passed, and as it did so the concrete structure of the church became visible. Its foundations had been laid at the very beginning, its main institutions were building in the midst of the mysticism over which the Holy Ghost presided. But when the hope of seeing Christ return in judgment had grown faint, a new interest would attach to every memory, every act of the historic Jesus. (And so, as the church prepared to take its stand in time and not in eternity, the most treasured possession it had was that memorial supper which symbolised or repeated the sacrifice of the Son of Man, and afforded communion with him. Through the Eucharist, Christianity was bound to Christ. In the mystery of the bread and wine was found the tie that knit it closest to the first great sacrifice upon which it was based.²)

It was, of course, not the eucharistic communion alone which brought about the Catholic church. For other practices were linked with its celebration which prevented even the Eucharist from losing its personal significance. In the meetings at the Lord's table, the teachings and the history of Christ were recited, the first fragments of the gospels. It was there the apostolic exhortations and reminiscences of Christ were

¹ The writer of Acts describes manifestations of the Spirit as if he were uncertain of them. "This is the first sign of the sobering of the churches." Harnack, I., p. 209, note.

² Harnack, I., p. 60. "By teaching them to think of him and of his death in the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine, and by saying of his death that it takes place for the remission of sins, he has claimed for all future disciples what was a matter of course so long as he sojourned with them, but what might fade away after he had parted from them."

read. And those who listened could recite their belief in the life and acts of the Saviour in a sort of creed, even in the days when the Holy Spirit was the guide.¹ But this teaching about the life of Christ made the memorial sacrifice all the more vivid. It increased rather than diminished the influence of the Eucharist in basing the church upon the historic Jesus.

We cannot, however, linger over a description of the beliefs and the spiritual life of primitive Christianity. Our work is to trace through its changing environment the eucharistic ceremony, to estimate what influence it had upon the practical life of Christians, and later upon the institutions not only of the church, but of all Christendom.

¹ On the Symbol, see Harnack's article "Apostolisches Symbolism" in Hauck's *Realencyclopädie*; Kattenbusch, *Das Apostolische Symbolum*; McGiffert, *The Apostles' Creed*. Baptism should receive attention here. The two conceptions of baptism, spiritual and material purifying, have close relation to the subject in hand.

CHAPTER II.

THE MEETINGS OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

In spite of the simplicity of primitive Christianity, the lack of institutions, and the absence of any permanent or legal character in its arrangement, we may consider the religious service of the early church as having two main, and fairly distinct parts. The basis of this division we have already hinted at, for that part of the service which was dominated by the presence of the Holy Spirit, speaking through the prophet or teacher,¹ was different in import and purpose from the part devoted to the communion meal. To be sure the two parts were not at first separated into distinct ceremonies taking place at different times. They must have been merged in general into a single communion with God, through the presence both of the Holy Spirit and of the commemorated Christ. For the gift of tongues would not fail even at the most distinctively memorial service, and the Lord's Supper would be celebrated when Christians met for religious edification, or to enjoy the manifestation of the Spirit. Yet in the nature of the case, their divergent purposes tended to make the separation real. Religious instruction had to be open to the public if the church was to grow, and this brought out a meeting of the congregation for the "Word," which became distinct from the meeting for the Lord's Supper, at which only Christians could be admitted. We have no clear evidence of the separation of these two functions into different meetings until the second century,² but their existence, in the Corinthian church at least, can readily be inferred from Paul's description, and the probability is that the separation began to be made in the earliest

¹ As to charismatic teaching, see Harnack's edition of the *Didache* (*Texte und Untersuchungen*, III., p. 93 ff.), and Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, I., chap. i. A graphic picture of worship in the early church may be found in the introductory essay by Owen to Wheatley's translation of Harnack's *Sources of the Apostolic Canons* (London, 1895).

² The examples of this fusing of all elements into an informal meeting meet us everywhere in the New Testament.—*Cf. Acts xx., 7, &c.*

times.¹ Yet even as it was forming, the distinction was not hard and fast, nor regularly observed. When the Christians met to break bread, they sometimes had preaching,² and always the thanksgiving that would at least be associated with prayer.³ But our survey of the primitive church will at least gain in clearness if we observe the distinction between its different parts and analyse the homiletic service and the meeting at the common table separately.

THE MEETING FOR THE WORD.

Few who read the first chapter of John's gospel attempt to understand that mystic phrase which takes us beyond the creation, "In the beginning was the Word." Fewer still are carried by it back of the ages of speech to that dim moment when Divine thought stirred at its own first utterance, and in its motion woke the universe. These speculations lie beyond the ken of most of those who use the English tongue; but what is to us the commonest of commonplaces still held in the language of the Greeks some gleam of its original mystery. The *Logos* or the Word stood for more than empty letters and blank sounds. It was the Power of the Divinity; its expression, and the means of its communion with men.

We cannot, therefore, find a better name for the meetings in which the Holy Spirit spoke through its prophets, or was aiding in the spreading of its gospel, than in the well-worn phrase,—the "Meeting for the Word," but it is not meaningless here. It is fairly vibrating with the full meaning of a time still close to the miracle of speech. It means prophecy, the gift of tongues, trance and divine possession, visions and ecstatic communings of the Spirit.

It is only by studying the phase of early Christianity which is here exhibited, that we are able to enter into the understanding of its other sides. And yet as we approach it, this spiritual environment of the early church is hard to analyse. It did not long remain the same; it changed even in a lifetime.

¹ The 11th chapter of 1 Corinthians evidently describes a kind of love-feast, quite distinct from the imparting of spiritual gifts, as outlined in the 14th chapter.

² Acts xx., 7.

³ Acts ii., 46, 47.

It had changed so rapidly in the first generation of Christians that even the writer of the Acts of the Apostles did not quite understand the situation of the earliest years as he looked back from the days of Domitian across a half-century of Christian history.¹ But though he was slightly at a loss as to details, he fastened clearly enough upon the main fact of his narrative.² The complexity and obscurity of the early period find their unity and explanation in the directing presence of the Holy Spirit. Indeed the narrative is so dominated by the idea, that the "Acts of the Apostles" might almost as well have been termed "The Gospel of the Holy Spirit." The risen Christ continues his guidance, scarcely interrupted by the crucifixion, and scarcely modified by the more difficult avenues of approach. The historian who thus pictures the earliest age of the church made no mistake. His narrative clearly represents the real ideas of the bereft disciples. To them the evidences of Christ's continued presence were of the utmost importance, for they were the best proof to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. One sure sign of the Messianic advent was to be a common enjoyment of the gift of prophecy,³ and this was the only manifestation of the Spirit in the earliest days of the church, or at least the only one attributed to it. The miracles of healing were not attributed to it until the time of Paul ; its miracle lay in the power of the unlearned speech.⁴ And that is why the day of Pentecost, when this miraculous power first became evident, was looked upon by the writer of Acts as the very birthday of the church. According to him the Christian propaganda began on that day, and the Spirit itself directed the Messianic crusade. It not only gave eloquence to men who were unaccustomed to public speaking,

¹ Cf. above, p. 9, note. Harnack, who believes it was written in the second century, thinks that sound historical footing is first reached in the first of the sixth chapter. (*Expositor*, V., 1887, p. 334.)

² His narrative begins with the parting words of Christ at his ascension as a sort of text for what follows. Those words, according to him, were the express promise that the Spirit would come in his place. Then, when the apostles chose a successor to Judas, he makes Peter date their own apostleship definitely from the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus at the Jordan. (i., 22).

³ Cf. Acts ii., McGiffert, p. 62 f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 75 f.

but even assigned missionary enterprises.¹ So, although its presence was not limited to meetings like that of Pentecost,² it was of most importance at such "meetings for the Word." The apostles felt that the ministry over which it presided was their most important trust. When social duties threatened to interfere with it, they gave up the social duties and devoted themselves almost exclusively to it. Missionary journeys separated the little group that had lived so closely together at Jerusalem, and as the Spirit accompanied them wherever they went, its working was mainly felt where the Word was being proclaimed. It need not surprise us to find in the first description which we have of a local church that there is a special meeting for such evangelistic and spiritual purposes. The private meeting of the Christians is concerned with the Lord's Supper; the public ministry takes place at a meeting for the Word, where the spiritual gifts are exercised.

Throughout the first century the ministry of the Word was in the hands of wandering evangelists. Apostles were followed by prophets and teachers.³ These missionaries, coming and going as the Spirit directed their way, brought the Christians together in the cities and country places as they passed, or met with them at their common gatherings. They made no arrangements beforehand, for they did not themselves know where the Spirit would send them.⁴ They did not stay long enough in the community to enter into its ways. When the tide of religious enthusiasm was at its full, in the apostolic and sub-apostolic age, a day or two was all the prophet might delay, as the Spirit impelled him to take his message throughout the world.

In the meeting for the Word into which these inspired mediums brought the presence of Christ, we are therefore brought face to face with some of the strangest and some of the richest products of the new religion. It opened with

¹ Cf. Acts viii., 26; xvi., 7, &c.

² It was also felt in the circle of the disciples by themselves. Scenes similar to those of Pentecost were re-enacted within their own little company when Peter and John came to tell them of the first miracle of healing they had been able to perform (Acts iv., 31 f.).

³ Cf. especially Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, pp. 16-66.

⁴ Cf. Acts xvi., 7.

praise and thanksgiving in both prayer and song,¹ and it is worthy of note, in connection with the origin of liturgies, that even in Paul's day these were not always, nor perhaps generally, the spontaneous utterance of the moment. He speaks as if the promptings of the Spirit, which had come through the days of work or in the silence of meditation, were carefully treasured up for the common meeting.² Some of these psalms were learned by heart, and passed from mouth to mouth and city to city, to be incorporated here and there in the literature of the Church—the song of Mary, or the ode-like hymns of the Apocalypse. They were the first lyric product of Christianity.

After the psalms came exhortation or instruction. This was given, for the most part, by those who were best acquainted with apostolic practice, and habits of thought³; after the apostles themselves, the oldest converts—the elders of the congregation, or “presbyters.” But direct revelation also played its part in the instruction of the community. This was the “prophecy” of which we hear so much in the early church. Such revelations were not the exclusive privilege of

¹ The normal order of the meeting may have been in Paul's mind when he described the doings of the Corinthians, “When ye come together every one of you hath a psalm, a teaching, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation.” (Cf. Weizsäcker, *Apostolic Age*, II., p. 225.) But, of course, the order may have been varied.

These songs excited the comment of Pliny: “Carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere invicem,” which has given rise to considerable difference of interpretation. Th. Harnack (*Gemeindegottesdienst*) remarked that “dicere” suggests rather oracular sayings than songs, solemn religious formula, &c. Newman (*Development*, p. 108) even hinted that magic incantation is meant. This is not the generally accepted view, however. See Lightfoot's *Ignatius*, vol. I., p. 50 ff.; McGiffert's *Eusebius*, p. 165, note.

² In Corinth they who came thus prepared were impatient to deliver their message, and would not give way when others desired to speak. The burden of the Spirit could not be easily loosed; disorders arose, and, as Paul gently hints, the pride of the speaker was smothering the brotherly regard which should have taught him to give way to his neighbour. It is this situation, this pride of the Christians in the fact that the Holy Spirit had made them its vehicle, that brought from Paul that immortal eulogy of the power of unselfish love. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal” (*1 Cor. xiii.*, 1).

³ When Timothy went to Corinth he was to remind the Corinthians of all Paul's rules in reference to the doctrines of Christ. (Cf. *1 Cor. iv.*, 17.)

the few, but might be accorded to any Christian.¹ They made the company of ignorant day-labourers a gathering of "saints,"² for whom the vision of the Judgment but heightened the splendour of the new hope that had shone upon them. It is not to be wondered at that minds peculiarly sensitive gave way under the high enthusiasm of the hour, and the speech of such mediumistic persons was regarded as the most direct and purest communication of God.³ This was the "Gift of Tongues." The revelations that would not fit themselves to human speech came in indistinguishable jargon through the shriek of frenzy or the mutterings of trance. There is something Oriental in this, but the Greeks and Romans had already seen its like in the abandonment of the Orphic or Egyptian mysteries.⁴

In such a meeting, given up to the thrills of religious ecstasy, the abandonment of passion, or the poignancy of guilt, it would seem impossible to make or enforce regulations which would give order or form to the proceedings. Any attempt to curb the Spirit from its free utterance might seem the product of unbelief. Yet the strong common sense of Paul was not to be subdued by rigid logic when the meetings were in danger of developing unseemly conduct, and when the Corinthian community consulted him on the matter he laid down two principles for its guidance. The first was that all was to be done for the sake of the others present, not for a man's own gratification; the other was that common sense was to be the standard by which to judge of the propriety of utterances. The effect of such counsel must have been to change the entire

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. xiv., 5. Like the psalm, the revelation may have come during the week preceding, as well as at the meeting itself. Owen's description of a typical meeting of the early Christians brings out well the use of prophecy. Cf. above, p. 8. The extent to which this gift was used by Paul as a basis for his teaching will be noticed later in connection with his directions for the Lord's Supper, where he claims to have his directions from the Lord. A study of this phenomenon is necessary for any one who uses the apocryphal writings of the post-apostolic age, as historic sources. Many of the so-called "forgeries" can be traced to it.

² So they commonly called themselves.

³ Cf. the emphasis placed upon it by the Corinthians (1 Cor. xiv.).

⁴ Cf. Percy Gardner, *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 157. "It was indeed a marvellous age, a time of inspiration, of the mixing of the human and the Divine into a draught which should restore to health a sickening world."

character of the meeting, and ultimately to put it under the control of the local church officials.¹

But there was one element of the meeting which was not under the direction of the Spirit. It was the custom in the Christian assemblies, as in the Jewish synagogues, to read lessons from the Scriptures, though these were now especially chosen to prove that Christ was the Messiah. Collections of the sayings of Jesus were also read at an early period, along with the story of the main facts of his life. These are the germ for our Gospels.² The letters of the apostles were also passed from church to church at an early date, but they are not found incorporated into the church worship before the middle of the second century.³

Such was the scope of the meetings for the Word. It must not be supposed, however, that all these parts of the service took place at every meeting, or that they always followed a definite order. The meetings retained their informal and spontaneous character so long as they were under the direction of the Spirit. Men spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance," and this freedom they could regard as merely an adaptation to Christian purposes of the practices in the synagogues, where anyone who was able to do so was allowed to speak. How far the meeting in the synagogue served as a model for the conduct of the Christian meeting it is impossible to say. It has been claimed by some that the church took over *en bloc* all the services of the synagogue, that its reading of the law and the prophets, its songs, its homilies and its prayers, furnished all the lasting elements of the meeting for the Word; that prophecy and the gift of tongues being but the extravagances of the moment were temporary modifications. But though the synagogue may have furnished the model in the minds of some, its influence must have been in general

¹ Cf. especially 1 Cor. xiv., 22. On all this see the fine analysis of 1 Cor. xiv. in McGiffert, p. 522 ff.

² The Gospel of Matthew is mainly based on the collections of the sayings of Jesus, that of Mark upon his deeds.

³ The fact that the writer of Acts seems unfamiliar with Paul's epistles shows that they were not in constant possession of the communities by his time, the close of the century. However, some critics deny that he was not familiar with them. Cf. Weizsäcker (vol. I., p. 208), Ramsay (St. Paul, p. 385), and Jacobsen, *Die Quellen der Apostolgeschichte*.

unconscious. For neither Paul nor Clement of Rome in their reform of the worship rely upon a definite comparison of Jewish synagogue with Christian church. Clement, with his eye mainly upon the Christian sacrifice, thinks only of the temple service. St. Paul goes no farther back than the inherent needs of the Christians themselves and their expanding society.

As for the time and place of meeting, there could be no system or regularity while the ministry of the Word was in the hands of the wandering evangelists. It is not surprising, therefore, that we do not find definite attempts to systematize this matter until toward the end of the first century, when its reform, along with that of the rest of the worship, receives the attention of Clement of Rome.¹ But his plea for regularity in all church services merely indicates the tendency which had set in, and our first picture of a set worship of praise is in the letter of Pliny, governor of Bithynia, to the Emperor Trajan. In it we are told that the Christians of Asia Minor in the first decade of the second century were holding their meetings for the Word only in the morning of certain fixed days. What days those were Pliny does not record, but it can have been no other than the Sunday celebration, which had been observed in an especial manner from the earliest years of the church.² But by this time we have reached the end of the history of a distinct meeting for the Word. The result of this use of Sunday as the day upon which it should be held, was to destroy its peculiar character. Instead of remaining the expression of that exalted religious enthusiasm which characterised

¹ *I Clem., I Cor. xi.*

² Cf. *I Cor. xvi., 2; Rev. i., 10; Acts xx., 7; John xx., 26; Ep. of Barnabas xv., and Did. xiv.* The first day of the week was a day of rejoicing, on account of Christ's resurrection. (*Cf. Justin, Apol. i., 67.*) Any meeting held on it would be a thanksgiving (eucharistic) service. The Word which the Spirit delivered upon such an occasion would not be unlike the services of thanksgiving at the memorial table, and in this fact we get a connecting link between the two kinds of meetings which prevented their developing into separate institutions as the service became stereotyped. In Pliny's day these meetings were still distinct, but it seems likely that, even if the Roman governors had not forbidden the celebration of the Lord's Supper at nightly meetings, it would have found a natural place in the Sunday morning service. This latter was so important even before the union did take place, as to cause Pliny to regard it as the most characteristic institution of the Christians. Cf. below, p. 43.

it from the day of Pentecost, it lost itself in other elements of the worship, which were also crowded into the same meeting. It became part of the morning sacrifice.

THE MEETING FOR THE COMMON MEAL.

There was from the earliest days a meeting of the Christians essentially different in purpose and conception from that which we have described in the last section. The little group of disciples at Jerusalem, when it was left alone, continued to meet, as it had formerly done with Jesus, in private houses and at meal-times. This home-life of the disciples is left aside by Luke in his narrative, as his eye is fastened upon the great theme of the presence of the Spirit and its effects. But in one or two places he gives us a glimpse of their relations one to another.

"They that received his (Peter's) word were baptized . . . and they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship and in the breaking of bread (or, the fellowship of the breaking of bread) and the prayers . . . and all that believed were together and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men according as any man had need. And day by day continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread at home they did eat their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God . . ."

This slight sketch is our first picture of the Christian church ; but slight as it is, we can already discern the germs of an organic society. Entrance to it is obtained through baptism ; instruction in its meaning and its purposes is then given by the leaders, and then "the fellowship"¹ becomes a reality profound enough to transform even the social life of the members. The group of believers becomes a brotherhood.²

¹ The Greek *κοινωνία* has perhaps a tinge of deeper meaning than "fellowship." It is derived from *κοινός*, common, and is better expressed by the Latin *communio*, from *communis*.

² The use of the term "the brethren" to denote Christians exclusively, occurs first in Acts ix., 30, where the society at Jerusalem is referred to in relation to the acceptance of the convert Paul.

Now the most universal sign of such a brotherhood is eating in common. It is thus that one is let into the social bond among primitive peoples ; and the practice has a religious basis, which recedes to the background as society advances.¹ Among the Jews the feeling of fellowship at the meal still savoured strongly of these primitive ideas, and the little group of Jews who had become Christians found there the first expression of their "community."

The "fellowship of the breaking of bread" does not refer merely to the act of eating, however. The phrase "the breaking of bread" was a technical one, and applied among the early Christians to that ceremonial act which followed the thanksgiving ; when the head of the household, or group, broke the loaves of bread that had been blessed during the prayer, and passed them to the rest ; even at household meals there were the elements of a religious ceremony in the act. Under the conditions of the apostolic age, it became a ceremony of most profound significance, and the phrase itself came to be a technical phrase for the Lord's Supper.²

But this religious element does not necessarily imply that there was any other special service accompanying the common meal, like that which marked the last supper with Christ. It must be remembered that the common meal itself had to the first disciples a significance it could not have in later years. When they met at it they were merely continuing the habits they had formed with Jesus.³ Their most treasured memories came from his companionship at table. There was a difference to them which we do not feel, between his public ministry and his personal contact with them that sanctified now their common meals, making them memorials even if there were no separate memorial service. It was only at the last of innumerable meals together that Christ had performed that strange ceremony which we think of distinctly as the Lord's Supper. And we are likely to forget that this was not a supper in reality at all, but only the prophetic or symbolic rite which was celebrated at the last of those suppers with Christ which

¹ Cf. *The Golden Bough*. The Jews would not eat with Gentiles.

² Though not always ; see below.

³ Cf. Weizsäcker, II., p. 279 ff.

had marked their whole discipleship. We do not know how often, if at all, the disciples celebrated this separate ceremony at their common meals. But it is probable that the growth of their little circle and the consequent intrusion of new converts who had not sat at meat with Jesus would in time bring out more clearly a distinction between meals that marked their fellowship and supplied their wants, and those more by themselves, when the vacant seat would itself be a memorial of Jesus, even without a repetition of the ceremony of the last supper. The germ of a division is already discernible in such a situation, which is later to produce on the one hand the Eucharist, and on the other the Love Feast or Agape, as separate and distinct things.

A matter of business which occurred just then may have had a direct influence in helping to bring out the distinction. The communistic group that made up the first local church,—that at Jerusalem—had to use the common meal to supply the actual needs of its members.¹ Living as they were in the presence of Christ, and expecting his return at any hour to establish his kingdom, they gave up most of their possessions or placed them at the disposal of the community. Wealth and possessions were nothing to them in the face of the impending triumph of the Messiah. But the business of this world is not so easily to be got rid of, and what ceased to concern the individual became the concern of the community. The common meal became the means of support for the poor and the strangers in Jerusalem, and an opportunity for the exercise of generosity.

Under such circumstances the little family group of the first days was developing into an organic society. The centre of its life—the meeting at the common table—was losing its simple character as the society became more complex. It was the source of alms as well as of fellowship and of the renewal of the tie with Jesus. The satisfaction of hunger seems at times to have been so apparent a motive that the sense of sanctity was lost in the complaints of those who felt slighted in the apportionment of food. This use of the meal as a means of charity shows already the cleavage begun which was

¹ On their "communism," see McGiffert, p. 67.

definitely to separate the Lord's Supper from the meal itself. The purely business element was intruding upon the religious.

This is strikingly brought out by the following account of the trouble which arose because of the exclusiveness of the old-fashioned Jewish element in the society.

"In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples and said: It is not reason that we should leave the work of God and serve tables. Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word."¹

This meal from which the apostles desire to be freed on account of complaints as to distribution of food, can hardly have contained a specific repetition of the ceremony performed by Christ at his last supper. The latter, they would have cherished too dearly to relinquish it even for the work of preaching. Yet we cannot say that it had ceased to be a Lord's Supper in the wider sense. That it still had such religious significance is apparent in the qualifications of those who were to administer it.

For this appointment of a committee to oversee the administration of the tables, must not be interpreted as a sign that business affairs were altogether overshadowing the religious functions. The sentence which seems at first sight so to distinguish the "Work of God" from the service at the tables must be taken with what follows, where it appears that the Holy Ghost will still be present through the new committee as it had been through the apostles. The work of

¹ Acts vi., 1-5. It is a most significant fact that, with this incident, the real history of Christianity may be said to begin. The first five chapters of Acts are incidental and vague, from the sixth chapter the narrative becomes concrete and precise. "Every reader who studies the Acts of the Apostles with care will observe that when from reading the first five chapters he passes on to the sixth, he at once enters on historical ground."—Harnack in *The Expositor*, V., 1884.

this committee is thus elevated above, and is different from, the simple duties of mere servitors or deacons, and it cannot be taken as the beginnings of the diaconate. The diaconate—the office of helper—does not originate until there are bishops to be helped ; it corresponds to a second circle of growth in the business of the communities. Here we are yet too close to the beginnings to think of an institution of charity sufficiently secularised to admit of business officials.¹ The seven were to be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the apostles were, and in a sense they are rather the first bishops than the first deacons, even although such an analogy is misleading. For the whole incident, although perhaps furnishing a model for other churches, would seem to have been purely isolated and even temporary. But while it is dangerous to build upon it the history of institutionalism, it shows the first sign of that division of functions that was sure to arise.²

The common meal at first summed up almost the whole life of the community. It was a meeting for the Word, when the Holy Spirit sanctified it in prayer and praise. It was a centre for fellowship as well as for the distribution of alms ; and as it grew less rich in memories of Jesus with the stretch of years and the growth of the communities, it was at it that the ceremony of Christ's last supper was performed when that ceremony emerged into history.³ The process of distinction by which these different things dropped away from it, and especially the way in which the Last Supper became a separate institution, forms the subject of a chapter of history that can never be written with certainty. In the disorders

¹ Charity was even regarded as a sacrament by some of the fathers, its nature was so sacred, and its working as a means of grace so important. See chapter v.

² Cf. McGiffert, p. 77. "The seven men thus appointed have been commonly called deacons since the second century, and it has been the custom to regard them as the first incumbents of that historic office. But they are not called deacons by Luke, or by any other New Testament writer, and there is no sign that there were ever deacons in the church of Jerusalem. According to Epiphanius, the Ebionite churches of Palestine in his time had only presbyters and archisynagogi. These Ebionites were the Jewish Christian reactionaries, who refused to advance with the Catholic church in its normal development. It is, therefore, significant that there were no deacons among them in the fourth century."

³ See next chapter

of the church at Corinth we can see a failure to distinguish between elements that seem to us clearly distinct. But, on the other hand, we find in the letter which Paul wrote for their guidance a complete picture of the different ceremonies which are still celebrated in the Christian worship. Was Paul already familiar with such distinctions, or did he create them? His is the earliest account of the customs of the Christians—written not twenty years after the death of Christ—and to judge of its value will take us slightly into the field of exegesis. And as we turn to the analysis we must remember first of all that where the sources of our knowledge are so few we must be cautious in applying them as explanations of phenomena so varied, and scattered throughout a world so diverse in characteristics as that which included Palestine, Greece, and Italy. The customs of the Christians may not have been the same in Antioch as in Corinth or in Rome.

CHAPTER III.

THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

I.—THE “INSTITUTION.”

We have four accounts of the last supper of Jesus with his disciples, one in each of the synoptic Gospels, and one by St. Paul in the first epistle to the Corinthians. Of these accounts, that of Paul was the first to be written in the shape we have them to-day, but the sources of Mark go back to a direct tradition which is at least as early as the epistles of Paul, and we may, therefore, expect to find in it the story of the Last Supper preserved with equal fidelity.¹ The other two accounts are of secondary importance. That in Matthew is almost identical with that in Mark, with but the doubtful addition of an explanatory phrase. The narrative in Luke begins by quoting the last part of that of Mark, but as the text now stands, rejects it for Paul's statement which is then inserted, though at first glance it is somewhat out of place.²

Of the two originals, then,—Mark and Paul,—let us begin with the simpler and more direct narrative of Mark :

“ And as they were eating, he took bread, blessed and brake, and gave to them, and said, ‘Take, this is my body.’ And taking the cup, he gave thanks, and gave to them ; and they all drank of it. And he said unto them : ‘ This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.

‘ Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.’

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.”

¹ We have it on the evidence of Papias, who was almost contemporary, that Peter himself supplied the information for this Gospel. Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* III., 39, 15.

² Cf. Matthew xxvi., 26-29; Mark xiv., 22-26; Luke xxii., 17-21; 1 Cor. xi., 23-26.

Leaving aside the narrative in Matthew, as identical in the main with this,¹ we turn to Paul. At once we are confronted with an addition of vast significance, for along with the simple story of Christ's act is His command, "This do in remembrance of me," which gives an entirely new meaning to the act itself. This addition of Paul is so familiar to us that we ordinarily fail to note its absence in Mark and Matthew, fitting in the phrase mentally from our knowledge of the actual repetition in the churches. The witness of Luke is so manifestly secondhand that it does not influence our survey of the sources, but if we accept it as it stands it naturally gives what weight it has for the story as told by Paul.² The four narratives thus group

¹ The phrase "which is shed for many," is filled out with the additional phrase, "for the remission of sins." This slight explanation seems quite in harmony with the style of Matthew (Weiszäcker).

² The narrative in Luke is provocative of so many discussions that in order to get an idea of its value, it is necessary to place it parallel with that of Paul. The parallel, as arranged by J. A. Robinson in the article "Eucharist" in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, is as follows :

Luke xxii., 17.

And he received a cup and gave
thanks and said :

Take this and divide it among
yourselves; for I say unto you, I
will not drink from now of the
fruit of the vine, until the kingdom
of God come.

And he took bread and gave
thanks and brake and gave to them
saying :

This is my body
[which is given on your behalf: do
this in remembrance. Also the cup
likewise after supper, saying :

This cup (is) the new covenant
in my blood, (this) which on your
behalf is shed].

1 Cor. xi., 23.

He took bread and gave thanks
and brake and said :

This is my body
which (is) on your behalf: do this
unto my remembrance.

Likewise also the cup after
supper, saying :

This cup is the new covenant in
my blood;

do this, as oft as ye drink (it), unto
my remembrance.

The portion in brackets is rejected by Westcott and Hort, as a later interpolation, since it is not found in the famous "Western Text" (the manuscript at Cambridge which they regard as representing a very primitive text of the gospels). Luke's narrative seems to be made up of both the Mark and the Paul source, but used in such a way as to complete his picture of the paschal meal at which, according to him, Christ instituted the sacrament. He inserts as part of the blessing of the first cup Christ's statement "I will

themselves into two divisions—Matthew and Mark following some old tradition, Paul and Luke differing from this. The point of difference, however, is one of immense importance, the vital question whether Christ commanded the repetition of the ceremony which he performed at the last supper or not. Where Mark says that Jesus said "Take," meaning but that one time, Paul has it, "Do this in remembrance of me," in the future. Upon the evidence of Paul alone rests the historic basis of the Eucharist.

It is disturbing to find ourselves in this position, for, although the genuineness of the text of the first epistle to the Corinthians is firmly established, and it is, as well, among the earliest of the New Testament books, yet Paul's own statement, upon which so much rests, is open to criticism when approached on the ground of historic evidence. In the first place it is not the statement of an objective fact, but the utterance of experience. With an emphasis which the translation fails to convey, Paul says that the source of his knowledge is a personal revelation. "I, myself, have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you."¹ These are mystic words, and their significance only becomes clear when one has become familiar with the part played by prophecy in the early church. In the following chapter of his letter Paul himself gives a slight suggestion of the source he relies upon for his statement. The inspiration of the Spirit, so real to Paul and to those for whom

not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come," which in Mark closes the narrative. Then, however, he turns from Mark to Paul's statement for the account of the institution. (Cf. Spitta's Analysis in his *Urchristliche Traditionen über Ursprung und Sinn des Abendmahls*.) But if we reject vv. 19, 20, in accord with the oldest form of the "Western Text" (Cf. Westcott and Hort), then Luke ceases to serve as a source for the ceremony at all, and the command to repeat it is very definitely left only to Paul. Conservative scholars who accept this textual criticism, still may claim that Paul's single evidence is more weighty than that of Mark (Cf. Sanday's article "Jesus Christ" in Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible*). Schultzen (*Das Abendmahl im Neuen Testament*, Göttingen, 1895) has argued strongly for the genuineness of the received text of Luke. O. Holtzmann regards Paul as a better source than Mark. ("Das Abendmahl im Urchristentum" in *Zeitschrift f. d. Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, May 1904.)

¹ Εγὼ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου. A great deal of controversy has hinged on the word ἀπό, which does not mean directly from the Lord. παρά would be the correct word for this meaning. But Paul uses these words indiscriminately (Cf. Col. i., 7, and appendix).

he wrote, is not a source that objective historical data can be built upon, even though it were claimed that it was Christ's own Spirit that spoke to him.¹ To be sure we might interpret his words less narrowly, merely regarding it as a stylistic expression for the fact that he had been guided by Christ to learn of this command. But in all Paul's life we find little indication of curiosity as to the details and incidents of Jesus's life. It is completely in accord with his entire attitude that this statement should be given rather on a dogmatic than on a strictly historic basis. This impression is enforced by the way in which the words of Christ drift off so naturally into Paul's commentary. One can hardly determine where Christ's command ceases. "This do ye, as often as ye drink, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The last sentence is by Paul, but so in tone with what precedes as to make the transition almost imperceptible. Whatever Paul meant by it, it reads like a prophet's revelation.

But the modern scholar does not accept Paul's estimate of Christ's motives, and finds the narrative in Mark more likely. Paul omits that significant additional sentence "Verily I say unto you I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." But it is the key to our understanding of the ceremony as recorded in Mark. It is completely in accord with the Messianic hope. "Christ himself, expecting, as he apparently did, to return at an early day, can hardly have been solicitous to provide for the preservation of his memory."² But as years intervened, Paul probably interpreted differently in the light of events, the simple primitive formula as it is preserved in Mark.³

This brings us to the second stage of our investigation. Where did Paul get the idea that Christ had commanded the ceremony to be repeated? It could not be of his invention. That would be contrary to all we know of the apostle who, more than any other, was breaking away from formalism and sacerdotal rules. The only reasonable explanation is that the

¹ Cf. Percy Gardner, *Exploratio Evangelica*, pp. 452, ff. Weiss, *Leben Jesu*.

² McGiffert, p. 68, note. Cf. Jülicher (in Weizsäcker, *Abhandlungen*), p. 244 ff. for fuller comment.

³ Weizsäcker, II., p. 281.

habits of intervening years had already incorporated themselves into the traditional words when Paul learned them; that Paul's statement of the command was not the cause but the result of repetition. When we attempt, however, to find historic evidence for this hypothesis, we are confronted with many difficulties. Since Paul's narrative is the earliest in point of time, it is difficult to find any other trace of the primitive custom which casts light on what was behind his statement. One remarkable thing has been pointed out by Weizsäcker; the common formula, quoted as the words of Christ, is in liturgical form,—and that too even in Mark. Only frequent use in formal ceremony can satisfactorily account for this. But no mention of such a custom has come down to us in the sources. The disciples met "to break bread, with thanksgiving," but nowhere is it stated that they met to repeat the ceremony of Christ's last supper. The wants of a whole community were supplied at the tables over which they presided. The common phrase "the breaking of bread,"¹ (*ἡ κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου*) seems sometimes to have a technical sense, underlying such sentences as that of Paul, "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?";² but it does not imply that distinct institution, separate from the meal, consisting of the consecration of bread and wine, which is later known as the Eucharist.³

¹ E.g. Acts ii., 42.

² 1 Cor. x., 6.

³ Cf. Th. Harnack, *Gemeindegottesdienst*, p. 85, for discussion of texts.

Sunday remarks that the same phrase *κλάν* (*κατακλάν*) *ἄρτον* is repeatedly used of a solemn act of our Lord independently of the Eucharist (Mark vi., 41, viii., 6, 19; Luke xxiv., 30). "And we gather from the context of the last passage that there was something distinctive in this act, by which our Lord was recognised (Luke xxiv., 35). We are reminded also of the many instances in which attention is especially called to the blessing (*εὐλογεῖν* or *εὐχαριστεῖν*) of food by our Lord. They are the same words which are used in connection with the sacramental bread and the sacramental cup. There is something in these facts which is not quite fully explained. There are lacunae in our knowledge which we would fain fill up if we could. The institution of the Eucharist appears to have connections both backward and forward,—backwards with other meals which our Lord ate together with his disciples, forwards with those common meals which very early came into existence in the Apostolic Church. But the exact nature and method of these connections our materials are not sufficient to make clear" (Hastings, *Dict. of Bib.*, p. 637). Renan came to the conclusion that Jesus used the sacred formula at his everyday meals with the disciples. Cf. *Vie de Jésus* (14th ed.), p. 314.

Indeed it seems rather to refer to a meal in which food is partaken of in order to sustain life. One striking instance of this use of the words to mean a Lord's Supper but not the symbolic rite, is in the description of the supper at Emmaus. No more impressive scene is recorded in the whole of the New Testament than that in which the Messiah joined his two disciples at their evening meal in the little village ; and "as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them."¹ Such a meal would be a real "Lord's Supper" as much as any specific repetition of the ceremony which Christ performed at the last supper. And when the apostles had become conscious of the presence of Christ with them after they had come back to Jerusalem, every meal would be like that at Emmaus. Whenever they met to break bread, he would be with them ; there would be no need of any memorial when the person commemorated was present.²

Such, as well as we can make out, was the character of the meetings of the early disciples. There could be no regularity nor system, no set rules nor rites to perform. They varied widely in both character and in form as the Spirit came and went. There is no evidence that they repeated Christ's actions in a set ceremony, but might we not surmise that the words of Christ were repeated as part of the formula of blessing ? How else could Paul have got the idea that Christ wished the words repeated ? Indeed, his own words will bear out this conjecture. The phrase, "the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?" seems to point definitely to the use of the words of Christ at the breaking of bread.

This comforting solution, that there was no repetition of the specific ceremony, but only of the words, at the opening of the meal, might perhaps stand, so far as the evidence of the New Testament goes. But we must now turn to another source,

¹ Luke, xxiv., 30.

² Dr. Gardner emphasises this point. "Such banquets with unseen guests were among the commonest phenomena of Greek and Oriental religion, more especially in connection with the cultus of those who had departed out of life. It was exceedingly natural that in this way every common meal should become a banquet of communion with the risen Lord. (*Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 455.)

hardly less important than the canonical writings themselves. Until twenty years ago, no glimpse had been accorded the modern world of the simple ceremony of the primitive Christians, except as it is represented by the reformer Paul. From the days of Paul there was no description of the Lord's Supper until the changes of a century were depicted in the sketch which Justin drew for the Emperor Antoninus Pius. But the discovery of the "Teaching of the Apostles," or the "Didache," has at last cast light, however faint, upon a subject so fraught with significance, and yet so elusive; and we can see a little further into the varying usages of the primitive age.¹ And yet the veil is not much lifted, for the writer's eye is not upon the little scene which we are so anxious to have revealed, but upon the moral and spiritual condition of those who worship there. The whole piece is suffused with teaching, and the mention of church usages when the author descends to details, is only the frame-work for his homily. Nothing is said about the place or manner of celebration of the Lord's Supper. No distinction is made between the common meal and a memorial ceremony. There is not even a sign of separation between meetings for the Word and those for the breaking of bread.² And yet the absence of such distinctions does not necessarily imply that they were all unknown to the author; for he would lay no stress upon them in any case. From the mere arrangement of topics it appears that the Lord's Supper was observed both in the common meal and at a Sunday gathering,³ for there are two distinct references to it; the first one occurring almost directly after the description of baptism, as if the writer's mind passed from initiation to the closed meeting of the little circle of the

¹ This important document, which was brought to light only in 1883, dates from some time in the first part of the second century. It is, however, a compilation out of previous sources and its exact date has been the subject of a great deal of discussion. It was possibly put finally in shape in Syria about the year 120. It is a short summary of the duties and usages of the Christians, all thrown into didactic form. Though of great interest because of its uniqueness, it demands additional attention because of its relation to a later source, *The Apostolic Constitutions*. The most detailed examination of the text is by Harnack, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, II. For a survey of the literature upon it, see J. V. Bartlet's article in Hasting's *Dict. of the Bible*, vol. v.

² Cf. the last of chap. x.

³ Cf. also Ignatius, *Smyr.* viii.

baptized ; the second one, coming after a long discussion of prophets and the work of the Spirit, occurs in the directions for the meeting on the Lord's day. The descriptions as given in both places must be quoted here, not for their liturgical interest, but as historical sources. At first there would seem to be almost nothing for us in these lines ; and yet their very simplicity is full of meaning.

(Chapter 9.) As regards the Eucharist, thus give thanks. First for the cup :—

“ We thank Thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David thy servant, which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus, thy servant ; to Thee be the glory forever.”

And for the broken bread :—

“ We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus, thy servant ; to Thee be the glory forever.

As this broken bread was scattered (in grains) upon the mountains, and being brought together became one, so let thy church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom ; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.

But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for respecting this the Lord has said, “ Give not that which is holy to dogs.”¹

Chapter 10 follows with a long eucharistic prayer which is to be recited unless a prophet is present, in which case the rules of the meeting are not adhered to. “ But permit the prophets to give thanks as much as they desire.” But the most important part of the chapter is the introductory phrase, —“ *After being filled*, thus give thanks.” These two chapters, taken together, describe “ the breaking of bread,” and it is altogether probable from the context that they refer only to meetings in family circles. Chapter 14 supplies us with a picture of the meeting on Sunday when, by the time the Didache was compiled, there was apparently a more formal ceremony. There the confession before

¹ This paragraph points to fairly late if primitive usage. It may be an interpolation of a last compiler.

communion is mentioned for the first time. But there is no hint that the essential features of the two kinds of meetings were different. The Sunday meeting is described as follows:—

“And on the Lord’s day of the Lord come together and break bread, and give thanks, having before confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. Let no one who has a dispute with his fellow come together with you until they are reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be defiled.”

The Lord’s Supper,—the “breaking of bread”—which is here described, is apparently not a mere rite but a real meal. The expression “after being filled” shows distinctly that this is the case.¹ There is no express repetition of Christ’s last supper, and no reference to its prophetic import. But the simple meal itself is transformed into something that bears a close resemblance to it. If it were not for that one phrase, it might have been possible to interpret the rest of the description as implying a repetition of the Last Supper. For the cup and the bread after all suggest, if they do not expressly symbolize, the blood and body of Christ. Yet as it stands there is no memorial of Christ’s death.

The main thing, however, in the eyes of our author is the thanksgiving. His whole concern is to teach that proper thanks be given at the breaking of bread. This idea so overshadows all others that he calls the whole ceremony a “Thanksgiving” or “Eucharist.” This is the first time we come upon the word used in this wide sense, and it is a strange fact that the first historian of the Eucharist does not describe the Last Supper, our Eucharist, at all! To be sure,

¹ In the Apostolic Constitutions *μετὰδὲ τὸ ἐμπλησθῆναι* is changed into *μετὰ μετάληψιν* “after partaking of the Communion.” Jülicher interprets the phrase in the Didache in this sense too (*l.c.* 231), but he is almost alone in this. Cf. Harnack (*Texte u. Untersuch.* II., i., p. 31); Weizsäcker, II., 285, 286; Achelis, Haupt, Loofs, &c. But it is a mistake to say that the Lord’s Supper is *connected with* the Agape, (Cf. Schaff, *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, p. 195, and *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. vii., p. 380; also Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte u. s. w.* III., 293—302, and Weizsäcker, *l.c.*); for there was no Agape yet in existence. Cf. Jülicher’s comment on Harnack’s use of the word, and Spitta, 250.

he does not use the word as a technical term, although he speaks of eating and drinking the Eucharist. His mind is not upon the ceremony, but upon the prayers to be taught. By placing all his emphasis upon them, he seems to have arrived at a conception of the whole proceeding as a thanksgiving. But prayers like these were the eucharistic or thanksgiving at every supper from the first; and in this sense every meal of Jesus with his disciples of which we have record was a Eucharist.

If the Lord's Supper was so interpreted in the Palestinian communities of the last of the first century—and the picture which the Didache presents was undoubtedly accepted as apostolic,—there is no indication that they repeated the ceremony which marked Christ's Last Supper when they met “to break bread with thanksgiving,” nor even any suggestion that they repeated Christ's words at the blessing of the meal. If we accept only what is on the face of the document, the Didache stands in the way of that solution of our difficulty which is suggested by a study of the New Testament texts. But the Didache is only a mere sketch, and it certainly omits mention of many familiar things. Although it seems strange that a manual for Christian worship, before the days of the *Disciplina Arcani*, should omit the main part of that worship, yet the Didache is not a manual for liturgy, but a commentary on the worship. Instead of saying “Then take the cup,” and adding directions for the action, it merely comments, “concerning the cup, thus give thanks.” Something is taken for granted. Shall we supply that something from the evidence of Paul,—a repetition of the mystic words of Christ ?¹

When our literary sources fail, we turn to the evidence of institutions. It has been held by high authorities that the early history of the Eucharist, or, as it was first called, the Lord's

¹ Jülicher has summed up his view as follows: “At first, following an inner impulse, they repeated the words (of the institution). Then this repetition, justified, as they had no doubt, by Jesus's meaning, was attributed back to his express command. Already Paul rests on the latter standpoint, he has never looked at the case otherwise. But we do not need many centuries for such development. In times in which the religious life pulsates so powerfully as it did then, the productivity in conceptions, in experiences and in legends is fabulously rich and sudden.” *Op. cit.*, p. 245.

Supper, is to be found in or attached to, that of the Jewish paschal meal, and that the Christians began to celebrate it as a counterpart or continuation of the ceremony of the old dispensation. Zahn, in his reply to Harnack's famous suggestion that the elements at the early Christian meal were bread and water instead of wine, is the last great scholar to make the paschal meal a basis for the Lord's Supper. But his thesis has been strongly attacked by Jülicher and Spitta.¹ The most telling points made against the passover origin of the Eucharist are the two facts that the Lord's Supper was held frequently, it was not a yearly feast; and that it exhibited distinctions between rich and poor, impossible at a paschal meal where master and servant sat down together. The textual evidence in favour of the paschal theory is, at first, overwhelming. In the Paul-Luke tradition the institution is unmistakably described as a paschal meal, and, although this is lacking in Mark, the chronology is the same, and the statement is expressly made that it was the Passover at which they met.² But the fourth Gospel, although omitting a description of the meal itself, quite clearly fixes upon the evening before the Passover as the occasion for the last meeting of Jesus and the disciples.³ Fortunately the discussion of this obscure point lies outside the limits of this study, since it was the universal belief of the early Christians that it was the paschal meal which formed the original setting, whether that really was the case or not. The belief made it an historic fact to them, and upon that belief was built the structure whose actual progress we can trace even where the plans are lost.⁴

¹ Cf. Harnack, *Untersuchungen*, VII., 2, p. 117 ff. Zahn, *Brot und Wein*, 1892; Jülicher, *Zur Geschichte der Abendmahlfeier in der ältesten Kirche* (Abhandlungen . . . Weizsäcker . . . gewidmet), 1892, p. 217 f., and especially p. 246. Spitta, *Die urchristlichen Traditionen über Ursprung und Sinn des Abendmahls* (Göttingen, 1893).

² Cf. Mark xiv. 12, 14, 16, 17.

³ Cf. John xiii. 1, 29; xviii. 28; xix. 14, 31.

⁴ The last notable study of this problem is also the most suggestive. Spitta, who rejects the paschal origin entirely, and even questions the references in Mark, so as to leave the Paul-Luke source as the one authority for it, holds that the paschal idea came into the tradition because the disciples came back to Jerusalem for the second passover, which was held a month after the first for those who were impure at the great feast. Since Jesus was crucified on the 14th of Nisan according to this chronology, the disciples could not eat the passover on that day.

But how did this tradition gain credence? There must have been some institution similar to the Passover which might have helped to perpetuate the Christian ceremony in this form. Modern scholarship has discovered a possible answer to this conjecture in the customs of the Jewish associations of the time. Scattered throughout the world, wherever there were Jews, these Jewish associations met as did the pagans for meals that partook of a religious nature.¹ At least giving of thanks, which was offered at every Jewish meal, would form a notable part of the ceremonial. The picture sketched by Paul of the customs at Corinth seems to describe such a social gathering. Paul, feeling that the words of Christ were out of place in the setting, pointed back to the origin, which he believed to have been a passover meal, and therefore more solemn. These associations of "fellowship"² were destined to develop into churches. Such is the conjectural history we are forced to trace through the early period. In short, all that we know of the earliest Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper, may be summed up in a word. It was a meal with religious associations, provided for out of the food which the Christians brought with them to be consumed in common.³ Meeting in private houses,⁴ the little family group sat side by side around the ordinary table, and passed from hand to hand the bread and cup. No acolytes nor deacons were necessary where so few sat at meat together. The blessing was asked in simple phrase by the

This also affords a tentative explanation of that puzzling fact of the return of the disciples to Jerusalem before Pentecost, which is now recognised to be the decisive fact in the history of our Christianity. This time, Spitta thinks, they met at a real paschal meal and its application to the deliverance of the Messiah and all the usual parallels would be naturally suggested. (Cf. pp. 290 ff.) On the date of the original supper, cf. Wright, "Some New Testament Problems," chap. 14.

¹ Cf. Spitta, p. 257.

² (*Kouvovia*, Acts ii., 42, 44-46; iv. 32, 33). On the association of the Jews in the Diaspora, cf. Th. Reinach's article *Judaei* in *Dictionnaire des Antiquités*, or its adaptation in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, article *Diaspora*.

³ 1 Cor. x.

⁴ E.g. The house of Mary at Jerusalem, of Lydia of Philippi, of Jason at Thessalonica, of Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, of Nympha at Laodicea, &c. Cf. Acts xii., 12; xvi., 40; xvii., 6, 7; xviii., 26; Romans xvi., 5 sq.; 1 Cor. xvi., 15, 19; Col. iv., 15; Philemon, iii., &c. But this was not always the case.

oldest convert,¹ or by whoever presided at the table—the visiting apostle whenever one was present. Prayers were recited with reference to Jesus, and thanks were offered for the two sources of life, the bread that sustained life in this world, the Christ who assured it for the world to come.²

¹ Cf. Clement, xlvi.

² Cf. the eucharistic prayer in the Didache.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE EARLIEST HISTORY.

THE REFORM OF ST. PAUL.

We must now retrace our steps to about the year 54 when Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians, and even through the four or five years previous to it, back to his visit to Corinth as he went down from Macedonia on the highway through the cities of Hellas. It would perhaps have added to the romantic side of Christian history if Paul instead of going on to Corinth had remained in Athens to make the intellectual capital of the ancient world a centre for the new religion that was to put to shame the learned and wise. But the dilettantism of the university town was not proper soil for that new spiritual life which he was preaching. The cosmopolitan and modern Corinth, the mart of the eastern Mediterranean, swarming with the work-a-day populace of a commercial and industrial centre, was more open to spiritual needs because less conscious of intellectual. It was to such a populace as this, thronging the wharves of the Peiraeus in the days of Pericles, that the gospel of Adonis and Sabazios had once been brought from Syria and Phrygia. Proud Athenians had listened, interested or disdainful, as the wandering bands went revelling through the streets crying the resurrection of Sabazios. It was to a populace like this at Rome that the soldiers of Pompey brought in the rites of Mithras which they had seen practised on Phrygian or Illyrian coasts by the freebooters whose ships held

¹ Cf. Demosthenes, *Pro Corona*, 259-260.

As to the tradition of a Pauline church at Athens, there is no evidence of any such organisation until long after Paul's visit. "Even in the time of Dionysius of Corinth the church there seems to have been extremely small and weak. Dionysius of Corinth is the first to say that Dionysius, the Areopagite, was first bishop of Athens." McGiffert, note to *Euseb. H. E.*, III., IV., note 20.

the paths to Persia. Corinth in the days of Paul was such a city.¹ But this very cosmopolitan character brought in one element which made it after all less distinctive than might seem at first. The Jewish colony at Corinth had its synagogue as it had in every commercial centre. And at the moment when Paul went there, the persecution of Jews at Rome by Claudius² had doubtless driven many refugees to Corinth besides Aquila and Priscilla with whom Paul dwelt.³

The church at Corinth, then, was not that typical church of the Gentiles which it is so often painted.⁴ For a while Paul turned to the Gentiles there as he did elsewhere, but his conversion of the chief ruler of the synagogue when he had ceased to teach in the synagogue⁵ and was using a Gentile's house instead, shows that he did not give up working among the Jews as long as he was at Corinth. Indeed the Corinthian congregation had one custom which is attributed to Jewish influence by these very writers who make Corinth the typical Gentile church.⁶ It had a meeting for the Word, separate from that from the meal, and that contained, as we have seen, most of

¹ Cf. Pausanias II., i. "The old population of Corinth is entirely gone; the present population is a colony planted by the Romans." It was founded by Augustus (II., 3; and Appian, *Punica*, 136). "In the market place—for most of the sanctuaries are there—is an image of Artemis; also wooden images of Dionysius, gilded all over except the faces, which are adorned with red paint In the middle of the market place is a bronze Athena." (Paus., II., 2, 3). See article on Corinth by W. H. Ramsay in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

² Cf. Suetonius, *Claud.* 25. "Judaeos . . . assidue tumultuentes Roma expulit." It might be noted in this connection that Trypho, the Jew with whom Justin disputes, finds Corinth a congenial place of refuge. "Having escaped from the war (of Bar Cochbar) lately carried on there, I am spending my days in Greece and chiefly at Corinth." (Dial. i.) Of course this is a century later than Paul's visit.

³ Acts xviii., 2.

⁴ Yet cf. Cor. xii., 2.

⁵ Acts xviii., 7, 8.

J. Reville remarks that the epistles to the Corinthians would have been unintelligible to a pagan unfamiliar with the Old Testament. There are not less than 80 citations from the Old Testament in them, not counting constant allusions to the Jewish sacred history. *Origines de l'Épiscopat*, p. 192.

⁶ Cf. Th. Harnack, *Gemeindegottesdienst*, p. 164 ff.

the usages of the synagogue, even if it had no organic connection with it.¹

It was for this church at Corinth, made up of Jews and Gentiles, that Paul ordered that division of the Lord's Supper into love feast and memorial of Christ which has been so decisive for the history of Christianity, the one to be a social institution, the other a sacrifice. What was it called this out? Was it pagan custom that must be elevated, or were the Jews responsible as well? Was the sacrifice of the altar of Christ instituted to prevent the contamination of Christian worship from the rites of Dionysus or Orphic mysteries? Paul knew how easy that contamination was. Lacking himself the vitalizing memory of that three years' life with Jesus which the other apostles had enjoyed, he strains after the reality of Christ through imaginative quickenings, and in visions, and in communings with the Spirit. Through these avenues his faith attains reality. But this high life, this clear apprehension of Jesus is not reached by the dulled brains of draymen or money-lenders who have heard the Gospel of Christ only for a few months; and Paul must stir their imagination to appeal to them, by his confident picture of the resurrection,² by his comparison of the conditions in Macedonia, or by the contrast of their few trials with his own sufferings.³ Their faith was not strong enough nor were their ideas sufficiently free from former influences to remain true to his teachings. Three years had hardly passed since the founding of the community when it had drifted so far from Paul's conceptions that he must give it the most minute directions for its guidance. Sixty years after, the Christians in the villages of distant Pontus are praying before sunrise to Christ as the Parsis around them are greeting the rising sun, and in the towns of upper Egypt the inquiring

¹ Cf. Spitta, 249. Das Abendmahl in Korinth trägt gar nicht spezifisch heidenchristlichen Züge an sich, sondern hat überall Parallelen in den jüdischen religiösen Mahlzeiten. Heidnische Einflusse werden sich nur in der Leichtfertigkeit, mit der man dieses Mahl feierte, erkennbar machen."

It is worth noting at least, that when Clement of Rome wrote his epistle to the Corinthians he based all his argument for the restoration of order upon the regulations of the Jewish priesthood and worship. (Cf. especially xiv.). McGiffert has a careful study of the disorders at Corinth, pp. 290 ff.

² 1 Cor. xvi.

³ 2 Cor. viii.-xii.

Hadrian cannot distinguish Christ from Serapis. From this confusion, to what extent did Paul save the religion of Christ ? The answer is but hinted at in these pages. The meeting for the Word no longer is to bear the character of the frenzied ecstasies of the devotees of Dionysus, and the sacred meal is henceforth to be set apart from the common tables. A line is drawn between sacred and non-sacred and the former is not different from every other custom they knew, it is the memorial of Christ, celebrated in a distinct ceremony, and between it and the rest of the world is the impassable barrier of the words of Christ himself.

Paul's reform in Corinth was, perhaps, not a noticeably great innovation at the time. He had established the custom in all his churches, of meeting for a Lord's Supper. This gathering for the meal in common was the very sign of the community's existence; it was the first indication of that organization which was to give the world priest, bishop, and pope. At it there had been a ceremony of blessing the food, of the offering of thanks and, as Paul states, a repetition of the sacramental words of Christ.¹ But all this had been still celebrated at a meal which lent itself either to identification with the Jewish passover, or to assimilation with pagan custom. Paul prevented this for the future by directing that henceforth the religious rite should be celebrated apart from their meals;² and so, in a sense, we may regard his reform as the first definite establishment of the Eucharist as a ceremony complete in itself. Its importance for the future is hardly more significant than its indications of the time, for with it we step forward into the environment of Catholicism. It marks a change from the spontaneity of an early society permeated with an unfailing sense that Christ was always present to hallow the smallest doings of life, and exhibits a condition in which formal and strict rules are necessary for its governance. "It is one of the strange paradoxes of history that the great apostle of liberty who did more than anyone else to oppose and destroy the reign of rites and ceremonies, should yet have laid down principles in relation both to the

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. xi., 23, "I delivered unto you."

² 1 Cor. xi., 20, 22.



services of the church in general¹ and to the Lord's Supper in particular, which were essentially formal and stereotyping in their effect."²

But the idea of the separation of sacred and non-sacred was, of course, not Paul's invention. It is inherent in the very idea of holiness that it should be set apart from profane. The primitive form of the conception, the taboo, underlay the Jewish as well as the Greek religion and regulations for worship.³

Circumstances at Corinth, too, had brought out a distinction between ordinary and religious meals even before the crystallizing work of Paul. The usages of that Christian community were different from those of the first group in Jerusalem in one very important particular. In Corinth they had no need to use the meal to satisfy daily wants, as was the case in Jerusalem.⁴ There they did not form a communistic group to await the coming of the Messiah. They were not sojourners dependent on hospitality, they had their homes in Corinth⁵ and the practice of having a common daily meal would have no meaning for them, as it had in the earliest days in those upper rooms that had been hallowed by Christ's presence. For the Corinthians, except for the very poor, the common table was an incident rather than a necessity, and this tended to make gathering about it less frequent.⁶ Their conception of the common meal was therefore somewhat like that of a picnic or banquet, and consequently they conducted themselves as their pagan neighbours would have done at their own festal gatherings in the club circles (*erani*) of Dionysus. It was their custom to take their baskets of provisions to the common meeting place, but they did not make a common distribution. Each ate of his own food;

¹ Cf. his restrictions and regulations of the meeting for the Word. Chapter i., above.

² McGiffert, p. 538.

³ The regulations of Jewish worship also served Clement of Rome as example for the separation of secular and religious functions. Cf. 1 Cor. xli. "Not in every place are the daily sacrifices offered." It must be remembered, too, that these directions were written in the name of the church at Rome.

⁴ Cf. Acts ii., 46; 1 Cor. xi., 20.

⁵ 1 Cor. xi., 22 "What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in?"

⁶ 1 Cor. xi., 20.

there was ostentation and feasting on the part of the rich, unsatisfied hunger and envy on the part of the poor. Such a meal, which was not a love feast, could not well be called a Lord's Supper. It was an old time custom, but it had not escaped the censures of Greek moralists as well. The greatest of these, Socrates himself, had rebuked it under circumstances so strikingly similar that they seem worth while recalling in the words of Xenophon : "On an occasion when some people had met to sup together, some of whom had brought very little meat with them, while others had furnished a large supply, Socrates ordered the slave, either to place on the table the small quantity for everyone to partake of in common, or else to apportion to each one his share. Then they who had contributed a great deal were ashamed to partake of that which was put on the table for general consumption, without having what they had furnished put upon the table also. This, therefore was likewise added to the general stock ; and so when they were helped to no more than those who had contributed only a little, they discontinued purchasing provisions at a great cost." ¹ How strange it seems that the picnic parties which had been attended by Socrates, were the disturbing factor in the little circle of Christians at Corinth which brought about the ordinance of the Lord's Supper through the words of St. Paul.

It will be permissible from now on to distinguish between the common meal, divested of its sacramental or memorial character, and the sacrificial offering of bread and wine. The love feast or agape is henceforth to be separated from the Lord's Supper.²

The reform of Paul was destined to become the method of the church worship at the Eucharist ; but it did not triumph everywhere nor at once. Two centuries afterwards Christians in Asia Minor and in Africa had not conformed

¹ Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, III., xiv.

² The celebration at Troas (Acts xx. 7-13) which took place about a year after Paul wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians, seems to show no sign of division of the two parts (though R. B. Rackham, in *The Acts of the Apostles*, can see in it nearly everything of the later practice). Paul at Troas seems to have acted with the freedom which the Didache demands for prophets (cx.).

their usages to those of Paul, but persisted in the eating of a meal without setting apart wine and bread as especially sacramental. Honey, oil, and milk were partaken of by Marcionites; cheese was used by the Montanists; and in the paintings of the Catacombs fish lies on the table with the bread, and even comes to be the mysterious symbol of the Eucharist in place of bread or wine. It would be anticipating to enter into further details of these later habits here, but they are almost our only hints as to the usages of earlier days. Only the persistence of the simple primitive custom could account for the later practice. A survey of all the texts of the first two centuries where the Lord's Supper is mentioned bears out this impression. While there are sixteen that speak of cup or drink, and seventeen that speak of water, there are twenty-three that refer only to breaking of bread.¹ Harnack's conclusion from these facts is that "the institution of Christ was at the first understood as having its blessing not in a binding use of bread and wine, but in the eating and drinking, *i.e.*, in the simple meal."² At this meal poor people might even use water; bread was the constant article of food, and so it is the most important. This emphasis upon the blessed bread explains another later practice, the consecration of bread for sending from one community to another as a sign of unity—the thanksgivings (*eulogiae*), as they were simply called.

THE MORNING MEETING.

Our first detailed account of the Christian cult is that given in Pliny's famous letter to Trajan, written in 112 or 113 A.D.³ The letter tells its own story, but it must be

¹ Cf. Harnack, *Brot und Wasser*, p. 131 ff. (T. u. U., II.).

² Harnack has gone even farther than this. "Die wichtigste Function des natürlichen Lebens hat der Herr geheiligt, indem er die Nahrung als seinen Leib und sein Blut bezeichnet hat. So hat er sich für die Seinen auf immer mitten hineingestellt in ihr natürliches Leben und sie angewiesen, die Erhaltung und das Wachstum dieses natürlichen Lebens zu machen" (p. 142). Cf. Jülicher, *Zur Geschichte der Abendmahlfeier in der ältesten Kirche* (p. 241), for criticism of Harnack's whole thesis, that the use of wine in the early church was of the merest incidental character.

³ Lib. x., Ep. 96. Cf. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, and Lightfoot's *Ignatius*, vol. i., p. 50 ff. for analysis.

remembered that it is only a sketch of local history, and not applicable as a whole to the entire church, nor to communities in other parts. Christians examined by him stated that :—

“ They had been accustomed to come together on a fixed day before daylight, and to sing a song responsively unto Christ as God (*carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem*), and to bind themselves with an oath, not with a view to the commission of some crime, but, on the contrary, that they would not commit theft, nor robbery, nor adultery, that they would not break faith, nor refuse to restore a deposit when asked for it.

“ When they had done these things, their custom was to separate and to assemble again to partake of a meal, common yet harmless (*promiscuum tamen et innoxium*), which is not the characteristic of a nefarious superstition ; but they had ceased to do this after my edict, in which, according to my commands, I had prohibited fraternities.”

From this account we learn that in Bithynia in 112 A.D. the meeting for the Word is still distinct from the meeting for the meal.¹ But both are now held on a fixed day (*stato die*), in all probability the Lord’s day, as we learn from later sources. The morning meeting does not concern the Roman governor except as exhibiting a curious superstition, but the other meeting, which the context implies was in the evening,² was so much like the meetings of the forbidden unions and fraternities that it had to be suppressed. At least the informants of Pliny stated that it had been discontinued, whether that were the case or not.³ The easiest way for the Christians to get around the prohibition would apparently be to transfer their celebration of the Lord’s Supper to the morning. But even the torture of two deaconesses failed to reveal such a custom. If we had no other sources but this to look to for a description

¹ Cf. literal analysis in Th. Harnack, *Gemeindegottesdienst*, p. 219 fl.

² In view of later texts, especially of such popular pagan notions of Christian usages as Tertullian combats in his *Apology*, the phrase “*promiscuum tamen et innoxium*,” conveys this meaning.

³ Cf. Moeller, *Church History*, p. 118.

of the Christians, no one would think of taking any other meaning out of the words before us than that a common meal had once been celebrated, but was abolished at the command of the governor. But we have seen that the common meal of the Christians was the very centre of their society, the most characteristic feature of all their dealings with each other. Without it there might be a communion of saints, but hardly a communion of brethren. And if the Christians of Asia Minor whom Pliny examined gave up their Lord's Supper, we can only wonder what kind of Christians they were.¹

Whether the Christians of Bithynia did secretly transfer the Lord's Supper to the morning or not, the change took place throughout the churches in general during the next thirty years. In the description of Justin, which comes next to that

¹ There is something very strange about the customs of the Christians as Pliny learned them. Why did they meet before sunrise to sing hymns? It was not fear of the law against sodalities, for they met in the morning before Pliny enforced this, and gave up only the evening meeting after it. Pliny seemed to pay no attention to the morning meeting as such, nor did he regard it as an evasion of his edict. He seems merely interested in it as a peculiar custom. And, moreover, as Th. Harnack pointed out (p. 219), the custom went back twenty years to the mild rule of Nerva. The reason for their meeting before sunrise must evidently be sought in the beliefs of the Christians themselves. Later Fathers tried to explain it by the idea that the Christians were expecting Christ's second advent in the night (2 Pet. iii. 10). Cf. Lactantius, *Divin. Instit.* vii. 19; "Nocte vigilias celebramus propter adventum regis et Dei nostri." And this explanation, which manifestly makes no attempt at historical justification, has been accepted by Semler, Augusti, and Th. Harnack. The classic and orthodox explanation, that the meeting is held in the morning because of Christ's Resurrection in the morning, has more weight, as will appear above. But whatever may have been felt in later times in regard to the nightly or morning meetings, we meet with no such idea in the earliest period. As regards the Christians of Bithynia, the peculiarity of their other customs, the exchanging of an oath which is not found elsewhere, seems to point to another explanation. Mosheim already felt the strangeness of this, as his remark, "Non Christianos hic audis, Plinius loquitur," shows. But Pliny was scrupulously careful in his dealings with them; if not more than ordinarily brilliant, his habit of mind was such that accuracy might at least be looked for in him, if in any of our sources. It is open to question if these "Christians" were in reality anything more than Christians in name. Were they like those who later so often provoked the Fathers by trying Christianity for a while as they would experiment with Isis or Cybele, confusing Christ with the other redeemers of the day? Did they worship Christ in the rising sun, a sort of Christian sect of the Essene or the Parsi? Although the Christians were widely spread through Asia Minor by this time, as Pliny tells us in his

of Pliny, the Lord's Supper is part of the morning meeting. This is a momentous change: only the reform of Paul is comparable to it in importance in the history of the Christian worship. The Meeting for the Word in the days when it is losing its prophets and the gift of tongues receives in their stead for the future the Sacrament of the Eucharist. And when St. Paul's reform is combined with this second great change,—the Eucharist sacrifice being celebrated in the morning by itself, and stripped of all but its religious significance,—we have already the elements of the Mass in sight.

But the reform of St. Paul was not generally combined with this change at the first. The morning meeting did not take over simply the symbolic supper, but the whole meal of which it was part. The participants still brought their offerings, as they had previously done in the evening gatherings, and the deacons continued to set aside out of their gifts the necessary alms or contributions for the support of the visitors and clergy. Even in the middle of the third century it was possible to support oneself partly by the food of the Lord's table.¹ The meal or something not unlike it probably persisted at the morning meeting so long as offerings were made in kind. So that it rather seems at first as if the whole evening meeting has just been incorporated into the meeting for the Word. But the reform of Paul was now assured

general remarks to Trajan, yet the part of Pontus where he gathered his information was far away from the track of Paul, and right on the path between Persia and the Black Sea traffic. During the year 112 he was visiting the eastern portion of his vast province, and the letters which describe the Christians were perhaps despatched from that very port of Amisus where Trajan permitted a certain amount of club life which he denied to Nicomedia. (Cf. Mommsen on Pliny in *Hermes*, iii. 59; Ramsay, p. 224 f.; Pliny, p. 93.) The Christian renegades who gave him his information may have been living twenty years in Amisus in contact with worshippers of Mithras. (Reference might be made to Frazer's *Golden Bough* for a study of the conditions in Asia Minor favourable to a rapid spread of Christianity.) If in three years' time the Christians of Corinth had so perverted the institutions of Paul as we have seen, and even after his two letters felt the need of admonition forty years later from Clement of Rome, how true a picture of Christianity are we to get from the witnesses which Pliny examined? After all, is not this source greatly over-estimated? For an interesting study of the society in Pontus, cf. Theodore Reinach's *Mithridate Eupator*. On Amisus, cf. p. 247, and references.

¹ Cf. Cyprian, *De Opere et Elem.* XV.

acceptance in course of time, for the meal could no longer be partaken of with the same sense of its naturalness as before. It was now bound to be a ceremony of some sort. And the bread which had been blessed was taken home to be eaten there rather than in the meeting. Once more the very circumstances of the situation were the cause for a vital change in the Christian worship. At the morning meeting a common meal would not be the natural thing, it was when a half dozen converts met around a domestic table. But still they kept bringing their food, and continued their time-honoured customs as far as they were able. The breads that were blessed might be eaten at home if not in the great assembly. And these “*eulogiæ*” furnished in this way the last manner of celebrating a common meal in connection with the Lord’s Supper.

But there were those who did not acquiesce in this change of the Lord’s Supper to the morning. An important branch of the church in Africa, even in the middle of the third century, apparently held that the real sacrament was in the evening meal, although they were familiar with the newer custom.¹ The church was moving away from its early environment and adapting itself to new conditions. It was only natural that each stage of a development, which was inevitable, should seem at the time to be definitely settled and unchangeable. The conditions of the time determine orthodoxy, and those idealists or conservative thinkers, who put themselves outside the general movement, or seek to return to primitive custom, must bear the brand of heretics. Of the heresies of the early church, six at least refused to take this first step of compromise with the demands of a changing environment.²

Another influence upon the manner of Christian worship was the persecutions. The fact that this change to the morning was made about the time when persecution of the Christians was beginning to become a recognised policy of Roman governors leads one at first to the conclusion that it was a result of those persecutions. Nightly meetings of secret

¹ Cyprian, *Ad Cæcil.* Cf. Harnack, *Brot und Wasser*; also Jülicher's Comments, p. 225.

² Cf. Harnack, *Brot und Wasser*.

societies were forbidden by ancient Roman law upon pain of death.¹ The very existence of such societies was prohibited under the empire.² Trajan even refused to sanction the organisation of 150 firemen in Nicomedia, although the Roman governor gave his word that none but artizans would be allowed to join it, and that he would see to it that it was not used for any other purpose.³ But even a union of so few poor people "to improve their fare by dining together" was dangerous in a city given to faction and sedition. The vigilance of imperial administrators watched over such social unions in every city, from the frontiers of Pontus to the lowlands of Scotland.⁴ To continue the evening meal, then, was to invite persecution on the basis of the laws against *collegia illicita*, not to speak of the older law against nightly meetings, which applied to Rome. The discontinuance of the evening meal by the Christians of Bithynia so eluded the law against *collegia* or *sodalitates* that Pliny was at a loss how he should deal with them. Consequently, it would seem as if the persecution had effected half the change in suppressing the evening meeting. If the Christians of Pontus did not transfer their meal to the morning, that might be attributed to their own peculiarity, since the transference took place elsewhere. So far, it would seem evident that the change was due to the persecutions. But giving up the evening meetings did not end persecutions. Pliny himself, as well as Trajan, felt instinctively the hostility of Christianity to the empire, and "it is not too much to say that if a man like Pliny perceived forthwith the disobedience that was inherent in the new religion, every governor of any Asiatic province, every Emperor of Rome, and every prefect of the city must have made the same discovery for himself long before 112."⁵ Henceforth persecution of Christians was a settled policy, not necessarily because of their violation of a specific law, but because they were held to be enemies of

¹ The prohibition is said to have been made in the twelve tables. Cf. Porcius Latro decl. in Catil. 19.

² Excepting *collegia tenuiorum*, benefit clubs for poor people. Cf. chap. v.

³ Cf. Plin. Ep. ad Trai., p. 33, and Trai. ad Plin., p. 34. Ramsay, p. 358.

⁴ Cf. Liebnam, 29 ff. and below. Note the interest of Trajan in Amisus (Ep., p. 93). Cf. Ramsay, p. 225.

⁵ Ramsay, p. 357.

society and of the government of the empire—a fact of which they made open avowal and even frequent boast.¹ When this became the case, it is difficult to see how the meeting in the morning would be any safer or as safe as the meeting by night. Even if the latter were expressly forbidden, the former was surer of detection. If the persecutions were as universal and as severe as has been commonly thought, we should rather expect to learn that the Christians drew even their meeting for the Word under the secrecy which sealed the nightly meeting for the supper, instead of the latter coming out into the bold light of day, as a part—though secret itself—of a meeting to which outsiders were admitted.² The only explanation of what did take place is that the persecutions of the Christians were not so universal as former historians have described them to be.

The real cause for the transference of the Eucharist to the morning would seem to have been not danger from Roman officials, but the observance of the Lord's Day.

THE SUNDAY GATHERING.

In the East the day begins and ends at sunset.³ The festive meal or banquet which the Jews were accustomed to hold on Saturday evening, after the close of the Sabbath took place, therefore, according to their reckoning, on the first day of the week. Conversion to Christianity did not disturb this Jewish custom; on the contrary, it gained in significance, both on account of the closer bond of brotherhood at the Christian table, and because of the greater religious intensity which marked its celebration. The first definite description of this meeting of the church is in that most picturesque story of Paul's all-night sermon at Troas.⁴ The upper room was brightly lighted, as was the custom for a festival. But the presence of an apostle, who was at the same

¹ Cf. Ramsay on this. Recent opinion is that there was an edict of Nero.

² The meetings before dawn are still mentioned by Tertullian. But by Cyprian's time they are simply in the morning. (*Ad Caec.*)

³ *Acts xx., 7-12.*

⁴ Unless, as some would have us suppose, his teaching had reference to the meal thus postponed from hour to hour.

time a prophet, postponed the "breaking of bread" until the night was almost spent, and exhaustion had rendered the meal a necessity. The crowded room then witnessed the performance of the ceremony by Paul, whose zeal for "the Word" seems to have made the meal almost a secondary matter. It is, indeed, puzzling at first to find the Apostle a year after he had reformed the abuses at Corinth, assisting at a meal instead of a simple rite. But the author of Acts, who was present at the scene, describes not a sacrificial rite, but the common meal of the primitive church. The only conclusion is that even Paul himself had not in mind that formal representation of food which the eucharist has since become.

But the first day of the week had become more than an occasion for solemn breaking of bread, based on Jewish custom. The day itself was to be known as the Lord's Day, and the Jewish meal of the evening before was transferred into the centre of the next day's worship. Just why this came about it is impossible to say; but the traditional explanation, that it was due to Christ's resurrection on the first day will have to satisfy us here. Whether there was a confusion between the Roman and the Jewish method of reckoning time by which the custom of an evening meal on the first day of the week was understood later in our sense of Sunday evening, instead of Saturday evening, we have no sources to tell us. But when we next have mention of the Sunday worship, it is through Roman eyes, and the evening meal follows, instead of precedes, the Sunday morning worship. It takes place on what to the Jews would be the second day, our Monday.

There are already indications in the New Testament that it was the custom for each community to make an especial effort to meet together on the first day of the week, the day of Christ's resurrection.¹ This tendency grew rather than lessened in course of time. The Didache emphasises the significance of the "Lord's Day of the Lord" by an unconscious pleonasm, and makes Wednesdays and Fridays memorial days as well—fast days in commemoration of the betrayal and crucifixion.² But Sunday was to be a "festival, the queen and

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. xvi., 12; Acts xx., 7; John xx., 26; Rev. i., x.; but there is no command to observe the Lord's day in apostolic literature.

² Chap. viii.

chief of all the days of the week," as Ignatius calls it.¹ It was the proper occasion for that thanksgiving which was the central idea of the Christian worship, and although we have to wait 300 years before the Law of Moses is distorted and confused with Christian customs, so as to be quoted as an authority to compel the observance of Sunday,² the early apologists had sought to explain that the first day was to be substituted by the new dispensation for the seventh day of the old.³ Accordingly, while little groups of Christians continued to meet in family circles, around the table as in the past, on Sunday "all who lived in cities or in the country gathered together to one place."⁴ It was this Sunday meeting which proved to be decisive for the organisation of the church? It continued the one constant thing among the fluctuating and varying customs of the different communities. There were times when it could not be held in certain places; but what suppressions there were, were only local and temporary. The proof of this, apart from such references to, as we have in contemporary writers, is that when persecutions ceased, this meeting emerged to light fully developed, with enriched and enlarged ceremonial. If the larger gatherings had been given up in any great extent for the smaller meetings at family tables, or in chapels in the catacombs, as is so commonly supposed, the influence of the latter would be clearly marked in the forms of worship in the days of Constantine. Instead of this the traces of primitive custom are almost obliterated at the close of the age of persecutions.

So far we have been, as it were, on the negative side of the question. But the Sunday gathering has an importance far beyond the incidental matter of form of worship and development of liturgy. It was the origin of that worship which produced the Catholic church.⁵ The family groups, the two or three assembled in Christ's name, had no settled administrative organisation, no constitution, nothing but a custom. The prophets and teachers who wandered from town to town were

¹ Magn. ix.

² Cf. Harnack, II., p. 130.

³ Cf. Epistle of Barnabas, chap. xv.

⁴ Justin, *Apol.* I., p. 67. It is significant that this was written for a persecuting emperor.

⁵ Cf. Sohm's brilliant if one-sided *Kirchenrecht* (vol. I.).

under no law but that of the Spirit. There was no such thing as an organised church. The household of Aquilas is as much a church as the mixed throng at Corinth.¹ The believers themselves, not their assemblies, formed that mystic body of Christ, brethren held together in unity of the faith.² The Sunday meeting was the centre about which the organisation of the church took shape. Without it, or at least without the regular meeting for the eucharist, there was nothing static in the new religion. The only other concrete phenomena outside the limits of a family were the uncertain gatherings which were dependent upon the presence of the Spirit, "mere waves in the great stream of Christianity."³ Ignatius, the first organiser of the church, saw this very clearly, and he was as anxious that the meetings should be held regularly and should be an expression of the unity of the communities as he was that the bishop should guard its interests and maintain its permanence. So it is just a step from a description of the Sunday gathering to that of the organisation of the church itself.

¹ Cf. Rom. xvi., 5; Col. iv., 15; 1 Cor. xvi., 19; Philemon, ii.

² 1 Cor. xii. Cf. McGiffert, p. 636 ff., on the unity of the church.

³ Sohm, I., p. 66.

CHAPTER V.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORSHIP.

I.—THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

The words "priest" and "bishop" are products of Christianity. In the antique religions the "hierarch" and "sacerdos" administered the "sacred" rites. The words which we use to signify the sacerdotal officers of the church come from words that originally had no sacerdotal meaning. Priest or presbyter is merely the Greek word for elder, while bishop or episcopus meant overseer, director. The earliest uses of these words in our sources are therefore hard to translate; it is hard to determine whether they are the informal designation of functions not clearly defined, or the definite foreshadowings of a new sacerdotalism which grows up under this informal nomenclature. The difficulty is enhanced as well by the fact that already in the pagan usage the same sort of crystallisation had begun; and presbyter and bishop had already begun to have a technical sense differing from that which Christianity gave them. The triple difficulties of this investigation carry us for a while into the most technical phase of our subject. It is in a sense, however, the central point of this study, and perhaps the most important in historic results. We have explored the secret springs of Christian practices mainly in order that we may place them properly with more assurance when in the religious systems of mankind we find them made imperative for salvation of the individual and essential for the divine prerogatives of the church. We must now go back on another quest along the road we have come, back to the very beginning, and try to determine, if possible, who were the "elders" whom Luke says that Paul recognised as "overseers" or "bishops" of the church at Ephesus.¹

Perhaps no question in all the history of Christendom has called up so long and so fierce controversy, so much specula-

¹ Acts xx., 17, 28.

tion, or so minute research, as this one of the power and position of the bishops in the early church, and its presuppositions as to the nature of the organisation over which they presided. Our survey of the worship of the Christian community has already suggested a partial answer to the question. The extension of the cult, the multiplication of difficulties in connection with its growing importance, point to the cause which seems to us above all others responsible for the rise of the episcopate and the growth of sacerdotal prerogative. But it will not do to hurry so lightly over a point upon which rests the whole structure of ecclesiastical law. All questions of church government centre in this one, and the controversy concerning it is almost as old as the episcopate itself.

Scarcely had the church been subjected to the control of the great bishoprics when Jerome joined to the mute protest of the monkish emigrations out of the reach of bishops, his hard jibe against their pretensions.¹ Bishops were nothing but priests, he claimed, and any other authority than that common to the priesthood was usurped.² The word of Jerome was the weapon of Marsiglio of Padua³ and of Wycliffe,⁴ and a ready shaft for the polemics of the Reformers. In England and Germany during the three centuries since the introduction of Protestant forms of church government, few years have passed without some addition to the controversial literature. But through it all a gradual change is evident.⁵ The *furor theologicus* has given way to scientific methods of research. Such methods, however, have not yet brought positive result, for ecclesiastical polity is seen at last to rest largely upon exegesis, and there is no common agreement as to the value, genuineness, authorship, or time of composition of the sources.

¹ Cf. *Ep. ad Theop.*, lxxxii., 2, &c.

² *Comm. ad Tit.* i., 7; *Ep. ad Oceanum* ixix., 3; *Ep. ad Evang.* xxvi. (It is striking that this contention of Jerome is preserved in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, *Decreti*, Pars. I., Dist. 95, c. 5; surely one unnecessary addition to the "discordantia" of the canons. The influence of Hildebrand's monarchical movement may have had some effect here. (Cf. *Janus*, in loco.)

³ Cf. Marsiglio's comment on Paul's farewell at Miletus. (Neander, IX., 44.)

⁴ Cf. *Triologus*, IV., 15, p. 296.

⁵ A short survey is given in Allen, *Christian Institutions*.

The writer who puts the Acts of the Apostles in the second century will not agree as to relative conditions in that time with the one who claims it was written by 80 A.D.¹

But the organisation of the church is not entirely subject to the decisions of exegetics. Environment and general conditions played their part in such a way as to tell their story in broad outline, whatever the definite situation may have been at certain periods and at certain places. Indeed, the earliest sources do not admit of the reading into them of close distinctions or intricate arrangements, and any attempt to seek in the primitive church the institutions of the present, to read into the casual words of those who admonished to righteousness both leaders and flock, the technical terms of later days, shows poor appreciation of the spontaneity of the early Christian movement, its high religious enthusiasm, its sense of the indwelling spirit and of the approaching return of Christ. The legal conception of church, the humanised conception, one may call it, was unthought of by those who wrote the first account of the spread of Christianity. Therefore almost no attention is paid to the personal relationship of its leaders, the duties and functions of its officers, to the attitude of the people toward them, or even to the life of each community. Primitive custom and primitive jurisdiction are mentioned for the most part incidentally, because they were merely incidental facts in that vast enthusiasm which swept all before it in the early church. It was not until the flood of the ecstatic mysticism had subsided that men busied themselves in any great degree about the formal institutions of the church. By that time the early customs had been changed by circumstances and environment, and definite jurisdiction had succeeded to the simple relationships of family groups. It is to these family groups that we must turn for the history of the formal institutions of the church, and where texts fail as sources, we must fill out our picture from archæology and comparative study of environment. But we cannot understand the situation unless we go back of them and take a preliminary survey of the ministry of the apostolic age in general.

¹ Cf. Sanday and Harnack in their articles on the Origin of the Christian Ministry, in *Expositor* V., 1887.

The twelve of the disciples whom we think of as "the apostles" were naturally looked up to as leaders from the very beginning. They not only led in worship, but also directed the daily affairs of the Christians where they were.¹ Their pre-eminence is marked by the fact that they are spoken of not by the general title of "apostle," but as "the twelve." Before such a circle could become a sort of oligarchic committee, however, it was broken into by an outsider—Paul. He had not been one of the original group, and it was apparently his influence which caused the elevation of the conception of "apostle" to an equality with that of "the twelve."² Thus the barriers were let down, for Paul did not base his apostolic position upon a personal association with Jesus.³ Apostleship was wider than that ; it was based upon the call of the Spirit and the direct sanction of God.⁴ This "charism" was not the exclusive possession of the apostles however. It was shared by "prophets" and "teachers." These three classes of inspired men were practically all on the same footing as regards the authority of their message ; the difference lay merely in the extent and character of their inspiration. The office of apostle was much wider than that of either of the others, for it included missionary activity and oversight in general ; but it ceased to exist after the first generation of Christians. The prophets and teachers were then assisted by a fourth class of leaders known as "evangelists," and with it we reach the close of the development of what might be termed the "ministry of the Spirit" or of the "Word."⁵

These inspired guides were the founders and first directors of the Christian communities. But they belonged to no one of them, and did not enter into the life of the places they visited. They wandered homeless throughout the world, carrying the gospel, or giving to each circle of Christians they met the benefit of their message from the Spirit. We can get some idea of the tremendous spiritual force back of the early

¹ Cf. Acts iv.

² Cf. Weizsäcker, II., p. 293 f.; McGiffert, p. 647 ff.

³ Cf. 1 Cor. iv., 9, &c.

⁴ Acts vi., 3; xx., 23.

⁵ First mentioned in Ephesians iv., 2, which was likely written after Paul's death. Cf. Sohm, chap. i., for full treatment with references.

Christian movement, when we read in the Didache that it is a sign of a false prophet to remain over three days in one community.¹ But it also suggests a danger which was already felt, that impostors might profit from Christian credulity. This apparently was a real danger, for in the Epistles of Peter,² Jude and John³ there are already warnings against false prophets. The Didache warns against them in great detail. They should not remain over one day, must take no pay, order no meals by reason of their position, and even their message is to be critically examined.⁴ A note of the old time still lingers in the statement that to try or judge a prophet speaking in the Spirit is the one sin that will not be pardoned, but the general tone is one of criticism. This seems mainly directed, however, against those meddlers in the daily affairs of the communities who used the ordinary meetings around the common table for the delivery of their message. And it was made possible by the fact that another set of officers had already arisen in the communities, who were looking after those interests which the wandering ministry of the Spirit could not oversee. These officers were much more capable of managing the affairs of the local churches than the prophets or evangelists, and the criticism of the latter as busybodies, if they interfered, shows that the local overseers were already established in the churches at the close of the apostolic age. It is clear through all this that the apostles, prophets, and teachers were not three grades in the Christian communities. They have nothing to do with organization. The faithful test them instead of allowing them to guide the community.⁵

We must now turn to the "Ministry of the Word" to the origin of that which we may term the "The Ministry of the

¹ Chap. xi. St. Paul speaks as though they took their wives with them (1 Cor. ix., 5).

² 2 Peter ii.

³ 1 John iv.

⁴ Didache xi.

⁵ Cf. Loening, *Gemeindevorfaßung des Urchristentums*, p. 39 (Paul repeatedly insists on this duty of the believers. E.g., 1 Cor. x., 15; xi., 13; xiv., 29; 2 Cor. xii., 12). On the transition of these leaders of the religion of faith into wandering ascetics and later into monks, see the Syriac Pseudo-Clementine Epistles, *De Virginitate*, and Harnack's *Abhandlungen in Sitzungsberichte d. k. Preuss. Akad. d. Wissen.*, 1861, p. 361 f. The Shepherd of Hermas is one of the few literary outputs of this prophet class which has come down to us.

Church." From the very first there has been men in each local church who had more or less responsibility and oversight of their own societies. They had probably been the first converts of the locality,¹ or were looked up to as natural leaders by their neighbours. With the growth of the church there were times when their oversight must extend to matters of business or of regulation ; the care of the poor and the guarding against intruders, the observance of the worship,—all these would naturally fall within the scope of the local leaders, whose familiarity with the situation enabled them to carry out such duties better than could be done by strangers even if inspired. In certain cases they were even definitely assigned the task by the apostles,² though it is possible that it was the function and not the functionary that was thus recognised. However, it is but a step from the unofficial commission to the care for strangers or even to prevent the unregenerate from eating the meal with the brethren,³ to the definite assignment of offices in the local churches.

The assignment of offices comes very early indeed. Hardly were the apostles removed by death from the oversight of the churches,⁴ than we find presbyters, bishops and deacons definitely established as the directors of the Christian communities.⁵

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. xvi., 15; Clem. Rom., *l.c.*; Weizsäcker, II., p. 319, &c.

² Cf. Acts xx., 17, 28; yet Paul is silent on this.

³ Cf. McGiffert, p. 663, note. Harnack remarks, "that the bishops and deacons were, primarily, officials connected with the cults, is most clearly seen from 1 Clem. 40-44, but also from the connection in which the 14th chapter of the Didache stands with the 15th (*see* the *οὖν* 15, i.), to which Hatch in conversation called my attention." *Hist. of Dogma*, I., p. 213, note 2.

⁴ Whether personal or by epistles. These epistles were to go the rounds. Cf. McGiffert, p. 691, "Thus Paul directed that his Epistle to the Colossians should be read in the neighbouring church of Laodicea, and the epistle from Laodicea in Colossae. And so Clement's reference, in his Epistle to the Corinthians to Paul's letter to them shows that that letter was read in his day at Rome as well as at Corinth. The same custom was followed also with other writings than those of Paul."

⁵ Harnack, in *Expositor*, V. (1887), pp. 321-343, has gathered together all the texts which contain references to the Ministry of the church and arranged them in chronological order according to his judgment of their dates. His conclusions are, in the first place, that "Paul's epistles written before his Roman imprisonment we meet with no official persons in the strict sense of the word, nor with terms denoting office not with presbyters."

The writer of the Acts of the Apostles, who composed his narrative in the second generation of the disciples, cannot conceive of the primitive church as without the officers of his own later day. In his account he described Paul as setting up the definite system of rule by presbyters in the churches which he founded.¹ Paul himself, however, does not mention having done this. Clement of Rome, writing about the same time as the writer of the Acts, is under the same impression, that the apostles appointed their first converts who gave sign of the consecration or charisma of the Spirit to be bishops and deacons.² The process of crystallisation is already begun at the close of the first century. The inspired guides pass more and more to the background. Apostles, prophets, and teachers give way to bishops, priests, and deacons. The veneration accorded at first to the former was now to be given to the executive officership of the church.³

Parallel with this change in ministry came a change in the manner of the worship, and its effect in the establishment of the episcopacy will only be fully apparent as we proceed. With the passing of the age of prophets, the meeting for the Word changed from a primitive custom into a settled institution. It became the homiletic service of the church. But in doing so it was destined to lose itself in the greater service of the Eucharist. We have already mentioned the fact that the Lord's Supper was shifted in the second century from the evening and celebrated at a great gathering of the whole community on the morning of the Lord's Day. With the passing of the prophets the homiletic service lost its incidental character,⁴ and became a regular part of the stated weekly meetings. Through this connection came two results of immense importance. The local director of the affairs of the

¹ Acts xiv., 23.

² It must not be forgotten that the executive officers also had charisma as the basis of their power.

³ Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*, I., p. 215.

⁴ The primitive character of the meeting for the Word did not last long. We have already seen the growing process of regulation by which the congregation might interfere and restrain a too enthusiastic brother. In the second generation of Christians a movement towards sobriety becomes general. As noted above, the writer of the Acts does not seem familiar with the phenomena which he describes.

community now presided over the meeting for the Word as he had formerly presided over the Lord's Supper. The combined services made him now the director of every phase of the worship. At first he continued to recognise the privileges of the prophets. Even at the Lord's Supper it was the custom to "permit the prophets to make thanksgiving as much as they desired."¹ But as the direct utterances of the Holy Spirit began to fail, the local leaders of the meetings fell back upon traditional phrases of past utterances. It was the inevitable change ; liturgy and ritual were replacing simplicity and spontaneity. The meeting for the Word was being lost in the great ceremony of the altar of Christ. Prophecy and the gift of tongues were stifled in the growing prerogatives of a priesthood, and spiritual communion was in future to be sought through the consecration of the morning sacrifice. We have reached at a step the episcopacy and the mass.

Let us now turn to the actual history of the development which underlay this change.

2.—THE DIRECTION OF A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

The earliest form of association of the Christians was, as we have seen, that of a family, meeting around the table to partake of a meal together. The peculiar significance of this meal as a Lord's Supper made it a permanent and essential factor of their meetings, even as the family group developed into a large society. Communion at the Lord's table was a sign of membership in the church. Only the baptized were allowed to sit down at it, and not all of them. Exclusion from it was the first method of discipline. The Didache commands that members not in good standing shall not defile the sacrifice by their presence.

But the Lord's Supper was not only the centre of the cult ; it was the centre of the economic and social life of the community as well. The food which the members brought with them was not only for the meal, but was also distributed among the poor, and apportioned to sojourning strangers and, later, to the clergy.² These offerings continued to be made for

¹ Didache x.

² Justin Martyr, I., pp. 65 and 67. Tertull. *Apol.*, p. 39.

the table in spite of the growth of the communities. Alms were not as a rule given indiscriminately nor privately in the early church.¹ The idea of sacrifice was more evident in the offerings made at the table or altar than in private benefactions.² Now, the adjustment of these gifts would be very easy in a family group, but it would be quite a different thing when the community grew, and especially difficult at the great meeting on Sunday. At that the mere business affairs, not to mention the actual administration of the worship, would require not only tact but firmness.³ For it would fall to the lot of the overseer or overseers to enforce discipline. It is with regard to these Sunday meetings that the Didache warns against the intrusion of improper persons, whose gifts must be rejected.⁴ Thus a judicial position must be taken by those who presided over the meals. A singular indication of the close connection between the proper observance of the Lord's Supper and the whole administration of the local church, is the fact that the community at Corinth which called forth the correction of Paul as to its celebration of the former was conspicuously unfortunate in the choice of its overseers.⁵ It is clear from this that the mere business management of the community's affairs had much to do in making its overseer's influence so strong.

If the economic effects of the eucharistic service were great, hardly less were those which might be termed the social. One of the most strongly rooted conceptions of the early Christians was the unity of the church.⁶ They were a new

¹ Cf. Hatch, *Organisation*, 39, note; yet not always,—cf. 1 Tim. v., 10.

² It was from the Sunday gatherings that Paul looked for his collections from the churches of Galatia and at Corinth. Cf. 1 Cor. xvi., 1, 2.

³ Cf. 1 Tim. iii.

⁴ Cf. Chapter 14.

⁵ Cf. *Ep. Clem.* As Jülicher points out, it is evident that at first there was no bishop appointed at Corinth. Paul's appeal is to every individual, and he blames no overseer for lack of control.

⁶ Cf. the eucharistic prayer in the Didache ix. Harnack i., 153, comments on this as follows: "These speculations . . . have nothing Hellenic in them, but rather have their origin in the apostolic tradition. For that very reason they . . . soon became obsolete or lost the power to influence. Even the Apologists made no use of them . . . Augustine was the first to return to it."

and select people—the people of God. But their communities were scattered; the sick, and perhaps often the slaves and labourers were unable to attend the common table. It is a sign of the high sense of the significance of the Lord's Supper, that even for those who could not attend it furnished the bond of union. Consecrated bread was sent to the absent that they might continue in the Communion,¹ and interchanged between different communities as a token of unity. By this simple extension of the Lord's Supper the existence of the universal church was recognised, and exalted above the changing and uncertain arrangements of the hour. The Eucharist served not only to bind the community together, but the whole Christian world.²

He who blessed the bread which was to mean so much in the life of Christianity, aside from whatever idea may have been entertained of it as the Lord's body, and who directed the distribution, had therefore not only a certain priestly office, but was representative administrator and judge of this community as well.³ As the common meal summed up almost all the life of the community, so to preside at it, meant to oversee almost all the community's affairs. It was, therefore, only natural that the director in all these affairs should be spoken of as the "overseer," or "episcopus." The first mention of such an officer occurs in the epistle of Paul to

¹ Cf. Justin, above, and Tertull. on Prayer, xix. "When the Lord's body has been received and reserved."

² Cf. Letter of Irenaeus to Pope Victor in Euseb. *H.E.* v. 24. "At Rome where the great size of the community prevented its meeting together in a common place of worship, the sense of oneness was preserved by having one consecration of the eucharistic elements and sending them around by the hands of messengers to the other congregations." Hatch, *Growth*, p. 17.

³ Harnack's latest conclusions as to the origin of the episcopal office are that: "They are called overseers insomuch as they direct or superintend the assembly met for worship. Out of this function all others have naturally developed. There have naturally grown out of this: (1) the administration of the gifts generally; (2) the administration of the property of the congregation; (3) the charge of the poor and needy; (4) the care of visitors and strangers; (5) the representing of the church to those without; (6) in performing their service in connection with the worship they necessarily and in increasing measure had to proclaim the Word of God and edify the church." *Expositor*, V. (1887), p. 342. Cf. Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, I., 68. "Aus der Ordnung des eucharistischen Gottesdienst ist die Ordnung der Kirche hervorgegangen."

the Philippians, written from Rome about the year 63, in which he salutes the “episcopi” and “deacons.” The use of the plural and the general informal address to all the brethren, have led writers to the opinion that these words were not yet titles of office, however, and meant “overseers and assistants” rather than “bishops and deacons” as we understand the meaning to-day. But in any case it was the officers who had the oversight of the assemblies of the congregation that first received this designation “episcopi” for Paul’s epistle is a note of thanks for gifts sent him, and the mention of these officers in such a connection indicates that they had something to do with the sending, which could only happen through oversight of the offerings at the meetings.¹ This inference is borne out by the pastoral epistles. According to their author, the qualification of the episcopus are those of a good administrator, combining a warm heart with good discernment.² By the end of the century the office of bishop has become firmly fixed, so much so that Clement of Rome believed it had been instituted by the apostles.³ According to him the apostles on their missionary journeys “through countries and cities appointed the first fruits of their labours, after having proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe.” But their office is the same as in Paul’s epistle, they presided over the worship and have the oversight of the offerings, certainly a situation calling for discernment and generosity. In the Didache and in Justin’s account it is the same ; bishops and deacons are appointed because offerings are made on Sunday. The old source used in the Apostolic Ordinances describes the functions of the bishop as threefold ; he stands at the altar, cares for the poor, and is the representative of Christianity to outsiders.⁴ These were originally all comprised in the one oversight of worship. But their importance grew with the growth of the church and made doubly important the priestly office with which they were linked. The administration of charity was so important a function of the bishop that Hatch

¹ Harnack, *Expositor*, V., p. 331.

² Cf. 1 Tim. iii., 1-8; Hatch, *Organ.*, p. 44.

³ Clem. Rom. xlii., also xl.-xlii.; Didache xv.

⁴ Cf. *Texte u. Untersuch.* II. (1886).

looked to it rather than to the direction of the worship as the chief one, while another historian puts a like emphasis upon the episcopal duty to maintain the unity of the church in relations of one community with another.¹ The administration of charity brought out the application of tests to keep out the unworthy, and so extended a step further the disciplinary jurisdiction which the overseer of the worship exercised in the meeting itself.² The care of the poor was one of the most essential functions of the Christian brotherhood;³ but in the frequent intercourse of the earliest years charity was called for especially in the entertainment of strangers.⁴ The whole Christian church was in this respect a great freemasonry, and the maintenance of its unity would be in the hands of those who had the oversight of the offerings. The bishops were conscious of the fact that they were the representatives of this unity, and they symbolised the fact by the interchange of consecrated bread. But as the oversight of the worship gave them the control of the offerings and of charity, so it was the fact that they consecrated the bread that made it proper for them to send it to one another as a token of fellowship.⁵ Thus even the chair at the head of a family

¹ Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, pp. 361-374.

² Cf. Lucian's depiction of the gullibility of the Christians (Alexander of Abononteichos, *De Morti Peregrini Proto.*).

³ Julian attributed the success of Christianity to its care of the poor, and to counteract this, he commanded the erection of large guest-houses or hostelleries, with provision for the maintenance of travellers and the poor; so that the charities of Hellenism might win its converts too. (Cf. Epis. 49, 64-77.) The virtue of almsgiving was emphasized from the first by the Christians. C. Didache, iv.: "If thou hast money thou shalt give it by thy hand as a ransom for sins." This is the first of a series of such texts to be found in every theologian to Aquinas. Note as well how close it touches upon the principle underlying indulgences. On the sacramental nature of almsgiving, see Harnack, ii., 134. On the whole subject of the care of the poor, see Ratzinger, *Geschichte der kirchlichen Armenpflege* (Catholic).

⁴ But Polycarp wrote to the Philippians that the presbyters were to visit the sick (c. 6), and we must not imagine too exclusive adjustment of functions at first.

⁵ On Eulogia see Smend, *Die Entziehung des Kelches*, pp. 81-91, where are full references. Cf. also Drews in *Zeitsch f. Prakt Theol.* xx. (1898) pp. 18-38. Binterim's explanation (*Denkwürdigkeiten*, IV. iii, 535 ff.), is rejected by Hefele, *Concilien geschichte*, I. 749). The canon forbids sending what has been devoted to God as Eulogia at Easter to outside dioceses. In course of time the custom grew up of exchanging merely bread that had been

table was the centre of an ever widening set of functions, and those functions remained substantially the same when the chair had been exchanged for a throne.

But besides bishops and deacons there were presbyters. They are first mentioned about the time of Clement.¹ What were their relations to the others? This has been the unsolved question of church history. If we are to find any answer, we must find it in a study of the conditions and usages of the growing Christian communities, not in the field of dogma. The early fathers were no more creators of this or that form of church government than were the later doctors. Circumstances themselves were the creative element. The dicta of the fathers followed, and their explanations were devoid of any attempt at historic criticism. It was enough for them that in the church of God, all appointments were from Him.² The very inevitability of the arrangements contributed to such a view. And yet we have seen how in Corinth the evolution of the eucharistic service was due to the disorders which demanded remedy; how in the morning meeting the exigencies of the situation changed the character of the worship; and how, in the course of time, concepts fitted themselves to the changed environment. Hence our inquiry must go beyond dogmatic statements to the conditions which called them out.

The changes that took place in the manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper may be traced partly by the aid of archæology, where descriptions fail: and on the customs thus revealed we must base our history.³ At first, as we have seen, all sat around the table, and as in the Jewish passover feasts, one presided and blessed the meal. An upper room was

blessed, not consecrated, (e.g. Paulinus and Augustine,—cf. Aug. Ep. 28 and 37) and sending the consecrated bread only at Easter. This is what the synod forbade, out of reverence for the sacrament. Cf. also Keating, *The Agape and the Eucharist* (1901).

¹ This depends on the date of the pastoral epistle, which Harnack assigns to the second century. Cf. James v., 114; Acts xiv., 23; 1 Tim. v., 1, 17, 19; Tit. i., 5.

² Cf. Clement, xliv.

³ In what follows use has been made of Sohm's *Kirchenrecht*, vol. I., pp. 66 and 137 ff. His brilliant survey—which is followed by Allen, *Christian Institutions*, pp. 32 ff.—seems to have given almost the final word upon the subject.

sufficient for this in the Syrian houses where the apostles gathered their converts.¹ One picturesque glimpse of such a meeting has been preserved for us. The room in Troas where they gathered to break bread and listen to the discourse of Paul was a loft, three stories up, and so close in the warmth of early summer, that even the window ledges were used as seats.² Such a fact, even more than Paul's long sermon, indicates how informal, how like a family group the little gatherings were at first. The growth of the community did not bring about any rapid change in their manner of meeting. They still met in private houses, but the early practice of going from house to house³ seems to have been replaced in general by the habit of meeting in the home of some leading or perhaps more wealthy member.⁴ There is, however, no mention of buildings expressly for Christian worship until the opening of the third century.⁵ And even then they were at first the private dwellings in which they had so long been meeting, and which had passed into the hands of the community by purchase or benefaction. There they continued to meet in that central court which the Romans called atrium, the Greeks, peristyle. In the centre at the farther end stood the ornamental stone table that was the reminder of the sacred hearth, and here the Christian meal was spread. Even after the Eucharist was celebrated in the morning the offerings were still brought to the meeting as had formerly been the case at the common meal, and were gathered around the table, or altar, as it now became.⁶ But the congregation was no longer able to gather around the table as it used to do, and as the smaller groups continued to do for a century more.⁷ There was room for only a few to sit with the one who should oversee the meeting and bless the bread and cup. A seat at the table was henceforth a place of honour. Here then were seated the elders of

¹ Cf. Acts xx., 7 ff.

² It was probably May; Paul was on his way to be at Jerusalem by Pentecost.

³ Cf. Acts ii., 46.

⁴ In Jerusalem the house of James, Acts xii., 17, 21, 18. Cf. also Rom. xvi., 23; John ix., 10, &c.

⁵ The first mention is in the year 202; cf. Clem. Alex., *Stromata*, vii., c. 5; also *Hippolyti Fragm.*, ed. Lagarde, p. 149. Tertullian, *Adv. Valentin*, c. 3.

⁶ Justin, *Apol.* I. 67.

⁷ Cf. the well-known catacomb fresco "fractio panis."

the congregation—the presbyters—and the visiting prophets.¹ The rest of the people must sit apart, down the covered sides of the atrium, and as the food is blessed have their portions brought to them.² Deacons—helpers of the bishops—go amongst them, collect their offerings and take again to them their share of the food after it has been consecrated at the table.³ They themselves hold no office in the church. Already, before the end the first century, they are known as the laity.⁴ And in a vague general way those who perform the official duties are felt to constitute an order; they are the clergy.⁵ The eucharistic gathering has brought out something which already savours, however faintly, of the hierarchy of the Catholic church.

But it is clear that we have not altogether answered the questions as to the difference between presbyters and bishops. For what functions did the latter perform that entitled them to the place of honour at the eucharistic table? Or who chose or elected them; what authority had the bishop over them.

There is no doubt that to answer these questions we must go farther back than the Sunday gatherings of the second century. This, we claim, it is impossible to do upon the basis of texts. For although there is mention, as we have seen, of episcopi and chosen presbyters by the end of the century, yet it is evident from the writings of such an acknowledged arbitrator in disputes about episcopal government as Clement of Rome,⁶ that he does not know or care about a distinction

¹ Cf. Clem. Rom. xi. Full references are given in Sohm, I. 138. The tablinum (or prostas), which was a covered room opening at the back of the atrium, in full width with it, furnished a convenient and suitable place for these privileged persons to sit during the preliminary services. Its religious associations as the abode of the household gods may have had an influence in the development of the Christian clergy which has escaped the notice of historians. The tablinum became the choir of the church. Cf. Lowrie, *Monuments of the Early Church*, p. 98.

² Hermes, *Vis.*, III., 1, 8, 9.

³ *Ibid.*: and Clementine liturgy.

⁴ Clem. Rom. xi.

⁵ 1 Peter v., 3. As a technical term Harnack cannot find trace of its use before the end of the third century. (Clem. Alex. *Quis Dives Salv.* xlii.), cf. *Expositor* V., 1887.

⁶ Cf. especially chap. xliv.

between presbyters and bishops. He starts a sentence with a bishop in mind, and at the close he is talking of presbyters.¹ This confusion is in itself an excellent source; for although it does not imply necessarily that presbyters and bishops were the same, it does imply that the officership of the church was in a plastic state. By the time of the Ignatian epistles, the eucharistic gatherings had exalted the presidency of the table to the presidency of the community which met at it.

INFLUENCES OF ENVIRONMENT.

But if the monuments of Christianity itself yield us no more, let us turn to the environment. The names presbyter, bishop and deacon are not exclusively Christian titles. The officers in the municipalities throughout Asia Minor were called *episcopi* as well as certain functionaries in the fraternal clubs which so closely resembled the Christian communities. It was in fact a general term appropriated by Christians to express more or less parallel duties of oversight. The presbyters were also familiar to Jewish Christians as members of their local sanhedrim. The term deacons merely meant the ministers or servants or assistants. The fact that the church retained these terms of common use to designate its officers, would seem to indicate that it also carried over the meaning of their functions.²

It is over two hundred years since the view was first maintained by a critical historian, that the Jewish synagogue was the model upon which the organisation of the Christian churches was framed.³ This view has not lacked supporters to the present day.⁴ Some have modified it by applying it to Jewish Christian communities only, the gentile sodalities either following the model of the pagan fraternities⁴ or developing independently.⁵ The idea that the pagan fraternities exercised an influence upon the churches was due to the archaeological discoveries of the

¹ The fact that we can trace the main development of the clergy through Christian sources does not prove that outside influences were not at work. Cf. Harnack in *Expositor*, V., p. 342, where this view seems to be given.

² Vitringa, *De Synagoga vetere* (first ed. 1696, second ed. 1726), see comments in Th. Harnack (*Gemeindegottesdienst*, 117-113).

³ Cf. especially Duchesne, *Origines du Culte chrétien*. It is found in Rothe, Baur, Beyschlag, Weizsäcker at first (*Jahrb.*, p. 657), Jacoby, Holtzmann. (For further details, see Sohm, I., 8, note).

⁴ This combination is advanced by Lechler, *Apost. Zeitalter*, pp. 141-144.

⁵ E.g., Löning.

middle of the century. It was first brought forward in De Rossi's monumental survey of the catacombs of Rome, and was at once taken up by Renan.¹ We have already described the meetings of the associations. The definite influence upon the church organization must now be considered. The classic study of the religious associations of the Greeks, by Foucart,² which began to throw a little light on a subject which is yet almost unexplored, called out two remarkable essays by Heinrici³ in support of the theory that these societies were the model for the Christian societies. In the controversy which followed, the weight of authority has gone against Heinrici's views.⁴ But, in 1881, appeared a more noteworthy study by an English author. Edwin Hatch's brilliant sketch, the "Organization of the Early Christian Church,"⁵ sought to apply the comparative method with more care. As his is the pioneer English work on the subject, we may begin our survey from this standpoint.

First as to the origin of the official presbyters. Throughout the East the Jewish communities in each city had an organization with a governing body of elders, concerned, not with worship in the synagogue, but with administration and discipline.⁶ Although occupying chief seats in the synagogue, they were superseded in the religious functions by "chiefs of the synagogues"—as they were called—and their attendants. This organization is thought by Hatch and others to have been accepted by the Christians of Palestine, the teaching being supplied by the prophets or apostles after the custom of the synagogue, while the administration was taken over by the elders or presbyters—keeping the term used by the Jews for the members of the local sanhedrim.⁷ Hatch considers that on

¹ *La Roma sotterranea Christiana*, vol. I., 1864. *Les Apôtres*, 1866, p. 351 ff.

² *Les Associations religieuses chez les Grecs* (1873). The most thorough recent study is Ziebarth's *Griechisches Vereinswesen* (1896).

³ In *Zeitschr. f. Wiss. Theol.* 1876, p. 467 ff., 1877, p. 89 ff., &c.

⁴ For him, Weingarten in *Hist. Zeitsch.* 1881, p. 452 ff.; against him, Weizsäcker, Schurer, Wieseler, Holsten. (Cf. Löning, *Gemeindeverfassung, Einleitung*. Sohm.)

⁵ Translated into German, with notes and an excursus by A. Harnack (1883).

⁶ Cf. Hatch, Sect. III., for fuller account; also Duchesne, *Orig.* chap. I.

⁷ Cf. the expression of Ignatius, "The presbyters as the sanhedrim of God." *Trall.*, iii.

the conversion of a Jewish community it merely continued its former organization without a change;¹ but such a view is now regarded as overdrawn and extremely improbable. In fact, the use of the word presbyter to designate, not the members of an official order, but those individuals who knew the apostolic tradition, points rather to the natural development of the idea apparent in Clement, of the eldest in the new faith deriving their authority from priority in conversion and from intercourse with the apostles. This unofficial use of the term presbyter continued down through the second century side by side with the official use.² So that a man need not apparently belong to a Christian sanhedrim to be presbyter, although that was undoubtedly the growing tendency. But the main contention against this theory of Jewish derivation of the presbyter, is that the sanhedrim itself was not a creation of the Jews. The synod, or Jewish council of presbyters, was the same thing as the council that directed the affairs of other local religious clubs, and that was but a copy of the gerousia, or town council, in Greek municipalities, or the curia in those of the West. It was but one more instance of the common mode of governing such bodies throughout the whole ancient world. The Roman law emphasised this similarity in the constitution of the corporations,³ and it is therefore not surprising to find that the Jews of the Diaspora made their organisation appear to fit the common model.⁴ It is apparent that even if the name presbyter came into common usage among the Christians from Jewish environment, the derivation from it of the Christian presbyter does not cover the whole question. For if we look at it from the other side, the pagan religious associations had their sanhedrim in the *ordo decurionum*; and the whole system of administration goes back of all antique organizations to the structure of the city.

The date for the formation of such an *ordo* among Christians varies with each reader's interpretation of the meaning of texts where the word "presbyter" is used—whether it stands for

¹ *Org.*, pp. 59, 60.

² Cf. Irenæus, *Hær.* II., 22, &c.; Weizsäcker, II., 332, for full references.

³ *Dig.* III., 4, I.

⁴ Schurer, p. 15; Holtzmann, *Pastoralbriefe*, 195 (cf. Liebenam, 268 f.). Here we pass from Hatch's ideas.

nothing more than its ordinary meaning of "elder" in informal use, or signifies a definite official position.¹ This difficulty in addition to difference of opinion as to the reliability or date of the sources themselves has rendered the question practically insoluble. Lightfoot, for instance, held that the presbyterate was firmly and widely established at the close of the apostolic age,² while Harnack finds from the same data no traces of such an order until the second century.³

Such a "presbyterate," however, was not the "priesthood" as we understand it to-day. It was officialdom, perhaps even a sort of directorate, but with reference to the society rather than to the cult. This is inexplicable in an entirely religious organisation if we do not keep in mind the way the *charisma* of the Spirit was given to all the brethren, irrespective of their position in the Christian society. The presence of the Spirit made the whole community saints and priests, and did not admit of a limitation of the universal priesthood to the circle of the elders alone. This was not their affair; and they could only sit by and watch the operation of the Spirit in the congregation. They might have the places of honour in the meetings, such as were given the members of the sanhedrim in the synagogue, but they had nothing to do with the direction of the cult. In our first detailed description of the Christian worship—that of Justin—the presbyters are not mentioned at all, and even in the Clementine liturgy of the third century they occupy an altogether insignificant place.⁴ The bishops and their deacons conduct the worship.

We have now taken up one-half of our problem. We have got a little closer to finding out how the bishop came to be surrounded by a group of presbyters, as was the case in the earliest glimpses of the settled worship of the church. The "elders" of the Christian communities had derived their functions naturally enough from the needs of their own societies; but the early attainment of exact official position was made possible by the influence of *presbyteroi* in almost every other society they were familiar with. It will now be necessary

¹ Cf. Weizsäcker, II., 332.

² *Comm. on Philippians*, p. 195 (ed. 1891).

³ In *Expositor* V.

⁴ Cf. *Apost. Const.*, viii., 1-14

to see if the same will hold true of the bishops, whether their overseership as well became official and formal through parallel situations in the outside world. For the words *episkopoi* and *diakonoi* were no more peculiar to Christians than *presbyteroi*. The Greeks had bishops and deacons in their own religious associations, and it is natural to suppose that, however unconscious, the pagan method of supervision must have had some effect upon Christian methods.¹ The fact that bishops seem to have predominated in the Gentile churches as presbyters did in the Jewish bears out such a supposition.² Indeed, the structure of the pagan religious societies was almost identical with that of the Christian churches. In both cases the basis of association was the profession of a common religion ; both had a common fund for charitable purposes, and common meals were a feature of the Greek or Roman sodality as of the Christian community. Officialdom was recognised in them, as we have seen, like the presbyterate or later clergy ;³ and bishops and deacons looked after their concerns as well. But though the analogy seems complete, it does not follow that the contemporary pagan societies were the models upon which the Christian communities were organized.⁴ In the first place, while we have a general knowledge of the structure of the sodalities, the nature of religious societies in the East during the first two centuries of the Empire is very slightly known.⁵ In the second place, aside from worship and almsgiving, we might find analogies almost as close in the municipal organization. As we have seen, there were also the town decuriones and *episcopi*,⁶ and, in fact, the term *episcopus* was used much oftener in this connection than as title of the overseer of the private associations. So that the town organization lay back of the episcopate, as it did back of the presbyterate. And this is

¹ Duchesne impatiently denies all pagan influences. *Origines*, p. 10.

² Cf. Hatch, *Organization*.

³ Liebenam, 193; Hatch, p. 38.

⁴ Boissier, *La Religion Romaine*, II., pp. 338 ff., remarks that the similarities strike at first ; the differences grow as one studies the question.

⁵ Cf. Löning, *l.c.* Liebenam, pp. 266 ff.

⁶ Cf. Liebenam, *l.c.* Weizsäcker, in *Theol. Literaturzeit*, 1883, p. 436 ; Hatch, p. 37.

just another way of saying that, as the Christian communities took shape, they fell into the common mould of all such organizations. Informal offices of control or honourable position in the new societies were naturally called by the names that applied to such positions in the societies around. One influence which this environment would have would be in bringing out the definite idea of office, in place of the informal and ill-defined commissions of the earliest days. And this seems to have been the main effect. It hastened the development of the clergy, an office-holding body, apart from the laity,—and that in ways foreign to the spiritual conceptions of primitive Christianity. But beyond this it seems clear that the development of the Christian offices had its independent history. The internal needs of the growing societies necessitated more and more oversight and direction. And it was the method of celebrating that ceremony which was the symbol of unity and centre of all phases of Christian activity which made possible the hierarchical gradation of the clergy, about which the controversy has waged so long and bitterly. We must therefore accept the judgment of Sohm that the Lord's Supper was the main factor in determining the character of the constitution of the church.

We have not so far spoken of deacons, except incidentally to mention that they are found closely associated with the bishops.¹ They were his assistants at the tables; having actual charge of the distributions of the offerings.² Their office always remained subordinate, though the subordination was not so great at first as it became later,—witness the many decrees of councils against deacons assuming priestly prerogatives.³ But though it seems a far cry from the comparison in the *Apostolic Constitutions*,⁴ of the relation between priest and deacon to that between Moses and Aaron, to the stern

¹ On the establishment of the seven, see above, chap. I. "The name *diakonoi* was not only a common name for those who served at tables, but seems to have been especially applied to those who at a religious festival distributed the meat of the sacrifice among the festival company." Hatch, p. 50.

² Justin I., *Apol.* 55, 57.

³ Cf. below.

⁴ *Apost. Const.* II. 30.

repression of deacons at Nicea,¹ these assistants never seem to have been more than the hands and the eyes of the bishops. They did not act of their own judgment, but as commissioners of the bishop.² It hardly needed the application of the analogy of Jewish Levites definitely to subordinate these ministers to the regular priesthood, though the analogy probably had a permanent influence in the theoretical adjustment.³ In any case the deacons never attain independent jurisdiction.

¹ Can. 18.

² Cf. Pseudo-Ignatius to Hero, deacon of Antioch. "Do nothing without the bishops, for they are priests, and thou a servant of the priests. They baptize, offer sacrifice, ordain, and lay on hands; but thou ministerest to them." Chap. 3. Cf. *Apostol. Const.* II. 31, 32, 54; III. 15, 19, &c.

³ Cf. Hatch, p. 51.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III.

HIGHER CRITICISM AND CHRIST'S OWN MEANING.

It was Weizsäcker's epoch-making history of the *Apostolic Age* which set going the present controversy on the institution of the Eucharist. He maintained that Jesus spoke only in a parable when he uttered that strange phrase, "This is my body;" that he did not refer to his death when he gave his disciples the bread, but only when he gave them the cup. Weizsäcker laid stress on the point that Christ did not say: "Here is my body *broken* for you," but did make direct allusion to his death in the next sentence, "my blood shed for you." So Weizsäcker concludes that the bread is the symbol of Christ's presence, and the wine alone is the symbol of his death. This idea that it was all a riddle purposely left unexplained with the disciples, and finally guessed by Paul, has not found any very general acceptance.¹ In 1891 appeared Harnack's startling attempt to show that the elements used in the early church were water and bread rather than wine and bread (*Brot und Wasser, die Elemente bei Justin*). He reached this conclusion by a very close textual analysis of all references to the contents of the cup in apostolic literature, accepting only the literal meaning. Since bread was nearly always mentioned in the texts, and the contents of the cup but seldom specifically mentioned, Harnack concludes that the result is plain. "The institution was originally understood as containing its blessing not in prescribed bread and wine, but simply in the eating and drinking." [Zahn (*Brot und Wein, &c.*, 1892), and Jülicher (*op. cit.*) answered Harnack's thesis, but apparently not to the latter's conviction (*cf. History of Dogma*, I., p. 212).] From this Harnack passes to Christ's own intention. He holds that Christ wished to institute a

¹ Jülicher says it would fit the character of a mystagogue rather than that of Christ. *Op. cit.*, p. 240.

meal as memorial of His death. (Harnack accepts the statement of Paul as to the command for repetition.) But since it was a meal, not a ceremony apart from a meal, which Christ assisted at, Christ's idea was rather that he was to be the nourishment for their strength, than that bread and wine were unique avenues of its conveyance. Nourishment, spiritual food is the main idea in Harnack's eyes. Jülicher (*Zur Geschichte der Abendmahlfeier in der ältesten Kirche*) takes the view directly opposite to this. He emphasises the fact that Christ himself did not partake of the bread and wine, and thinks that he cared little whether the disciples did so or not. Like Weizsäcker, Jülicher sees in the institution a parable, but a simpler one than Weizsäcker would have it. As Christ sat at table, with the hour of his death approaching, he took the bread and broke it, as his body would be broken the next day. Then he poured out the wine, and as he did so, thought how his blood would be shed. Thus Jülicher makes this not an institution at all. There was no premeditation, but in the course of conversation, Jesus instructed his disciples in that puzzling but unforgetable method. "In the so-called institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus neither gave his disciples a riddle to solve, nor impressed on them an important part of Christian ethics. He certainly had no idea of doing anything for a church of the future. He instituted nothing. That sort of thing was left for the time when he should come again in His Father's kingdom. He took no thought for his memory, for the one who could utter Matthew xxvi., 29, had not reckoned in so long a separation."¹ This is about as far as radical criticism could go. But Spitta's contribution to the controversy, *Die urchristlichen Traditionen über Ursprung und Sinn des Abendmahls* (1893), is in another way even more destructive than Jülicher's. His point of view is directly contrary to that of Jülicher, for, while the latter made the words of Jesus apply only to the approaching death, Spitta thinks that Christ made not the slightest reference to it. Rejecting the paschal origin on the basis of a prodigious display of textual criticism, Spitta presents an equally prodigious array of texts from Jewish literature to

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 244, 245.

establish the conjecture that the last supper was the Messianic banquet which in the Jewish popular imagination was to mark the Messiah's triumph. According to him, the mood of Christ was not one of sadness nor even with a hint of the coming death, but one of joyful anticipation. This is an explanation on a new basis, and takes us completely away from traditional lines of thought. Spitta argues his point with an immense erudition, but his revolutionary ideas have not found much acceptance among theologians, although the eucharistic prayers in the Didache furnish a strong evidence in their favour. The difficulty of fitting the Didache in our plan of the history of the eucharist has already been pointed out. Percy Gardner is the one English writer to contribute definitely to the controversy. In *The Origin of the Lord's Supper* (1895) he even suggested that Paul might have got the idea of the ceremony he introduced from the mystery of Eleusis, which his curiosity would lead him to investigate while in Athens. This extreme position Gardner has now given up, in *Exploratio Evangelica* (1899), but still insists on the Pauline origin of the ceremony. Chapter 36 of this suggestive survey of early Christianity contains the most valuable radical survey in English. Professor Erich Haupt, in an address delivered at Halle, 1894, has criticised the radical critics on a textual basis, especially developing the sources for Paul's account. Haupt's main contribution is to emphasise the doctrinal element in Paul's account, and to show that Paul did not have chiefly in mind the historical statement. Thus Haupt's criticism leads to the same results as his opponents, in that it makes Mark the source for the institution. The next work bearing upon the institution is that of Schultzen, *Das Abendmahl im Neuen Testament* (Göttingen, 1895), which claims to establish the received text of Luke as genuine (as against the suggestions of Westcott and Hort). The main points of his thesis are, however, not historic, but Lutheran dogmatic. R. A. Hoffmann's monograph, *Die Abendmahlsgedanken Jesu Christi* (1895), has called attention to the fact that, whatever the original setting of the meal, Jesus makes no reference to the paschal lamb. Hoffmann, however, emphasises the reference to "the sacrifice of the covenant," which Moses celebrated when the lawgiving at Sinai was

sanctioned (*Exodus xxiv.*, 1-9), a point to be especially developed by O. Holtzmann ("Das Abendmahl im Urchristentum," in *Zeitschrift f. d. Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, May 1904). In spite of this it is interesting to see that Hoffmann arrives at the same conclusion as all the rest, except Jülicher, viz., that Jesus wished to transmit to his disciples his moral strength in offering them spiritual food. These views have been gathered together and criticised by Holtzhauer in *Das Abendmahl und die neuere Kritik* (1897), who has attempted to refute them by a sober and careful study. He insists on the idea of expiation along with Haupt and Schultzen. The defenders of the strictly orthodox view need not be mentioned here, except to point out that the higher criticism has not met with universal acceptance. For example, R. Schaefer, in *Das Herrenmahl nach Ursprung und Bedeutung mit Rücksicht auf die neuesten Forschungen untersucht* (1897), a volume of over 400 pages, "takes up in turn Harnack, Zahn, Jülicher, Spitta, Haupt, Brandt, Grafe, Schultzen, Hoffmann, &c., and refutes them one by one for the old Lutheran orthodox view." A survey of the controversy up to date was given by D. Bruce in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, vol. 35, pp. 205 ff. "Une récente Controverse entre Théologiens Allemands sur l'Institution de la Sainte Cène." Bruce himself was in line with the general results of Harnack, and rejected Spitta as unsound and overdrawn. Jean Réville agrees with this judgment on Spitta. "I subscribe entirely to the judgment which he has expressed on the ingenious and paradoxical interpretation of the Strasburg professor." (Cf. *Revue de l'Hist. des Rel.*, vol. 36, p. 117.) Cf. also Thayer, "Discussions respecting the Lord's Supper," *Journal of Biblical Literature and Exegesis*, 1899. Thayer's article is not very detailed and slightly discredits the recent criticism in favour of the orthodox interpretation, but states the main problem extremely well.

Each of these surveys apparently regarded the controversy as having exhausted the grounds of dispute. How far this was from the facts of the case is shown by the exhaustive work of Karl Goetz, *Die Abendmahlsfrage in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung: ein Versuch ihrer Lösung* (Leipzig, 1904), which

is the most thorough study of the whole problem in existence. It is a complete history of the whole question from the first scholastic dispute to the present, but the author has drawn his own conclusions on the basis of an independent textual analysis of each phase of the latest criticism. It will suffice to refer to this book for that full survey which it is impossible to give here. Had it been in the possession of the writer of this monograph four years ago it would have saved many hours of futile search.

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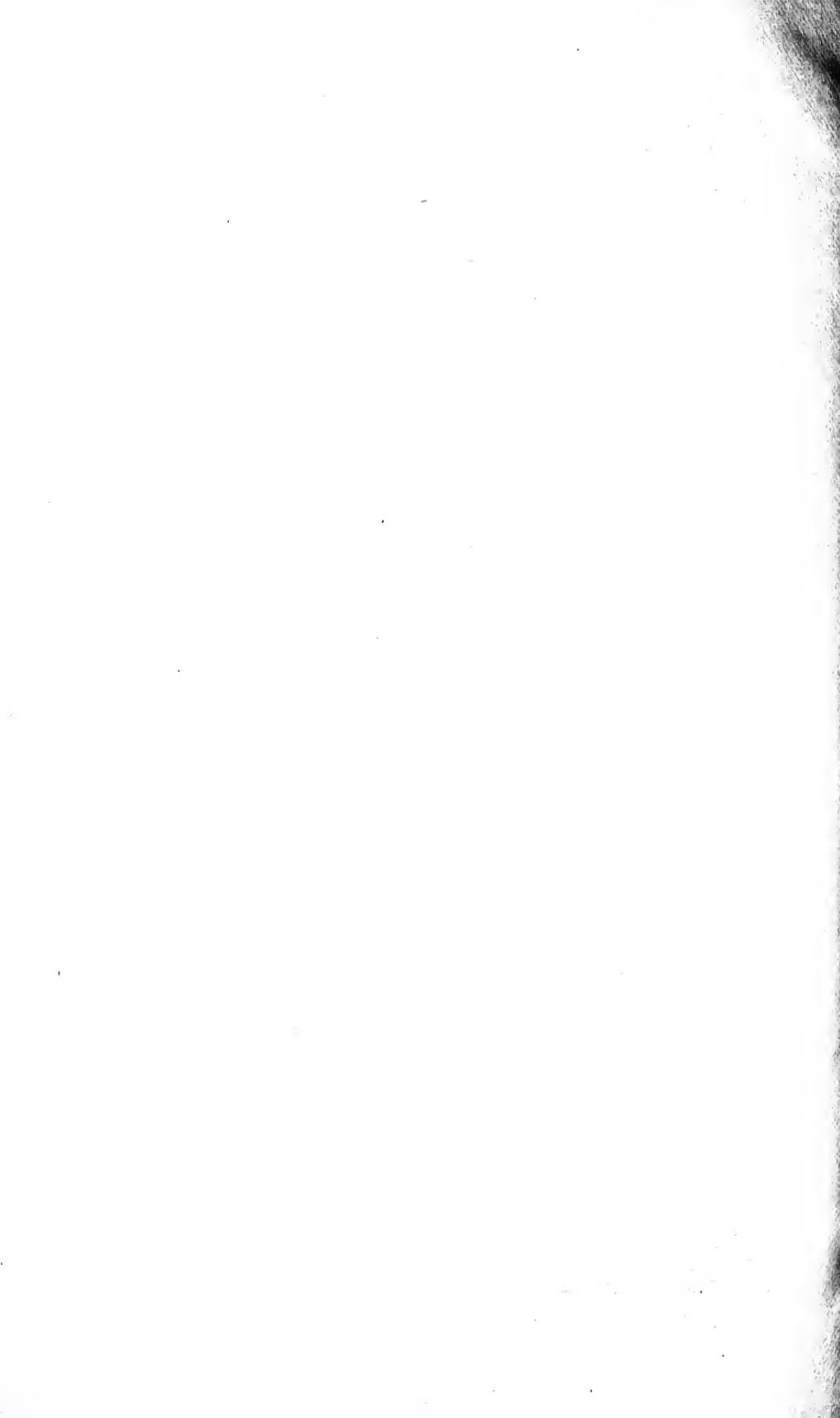


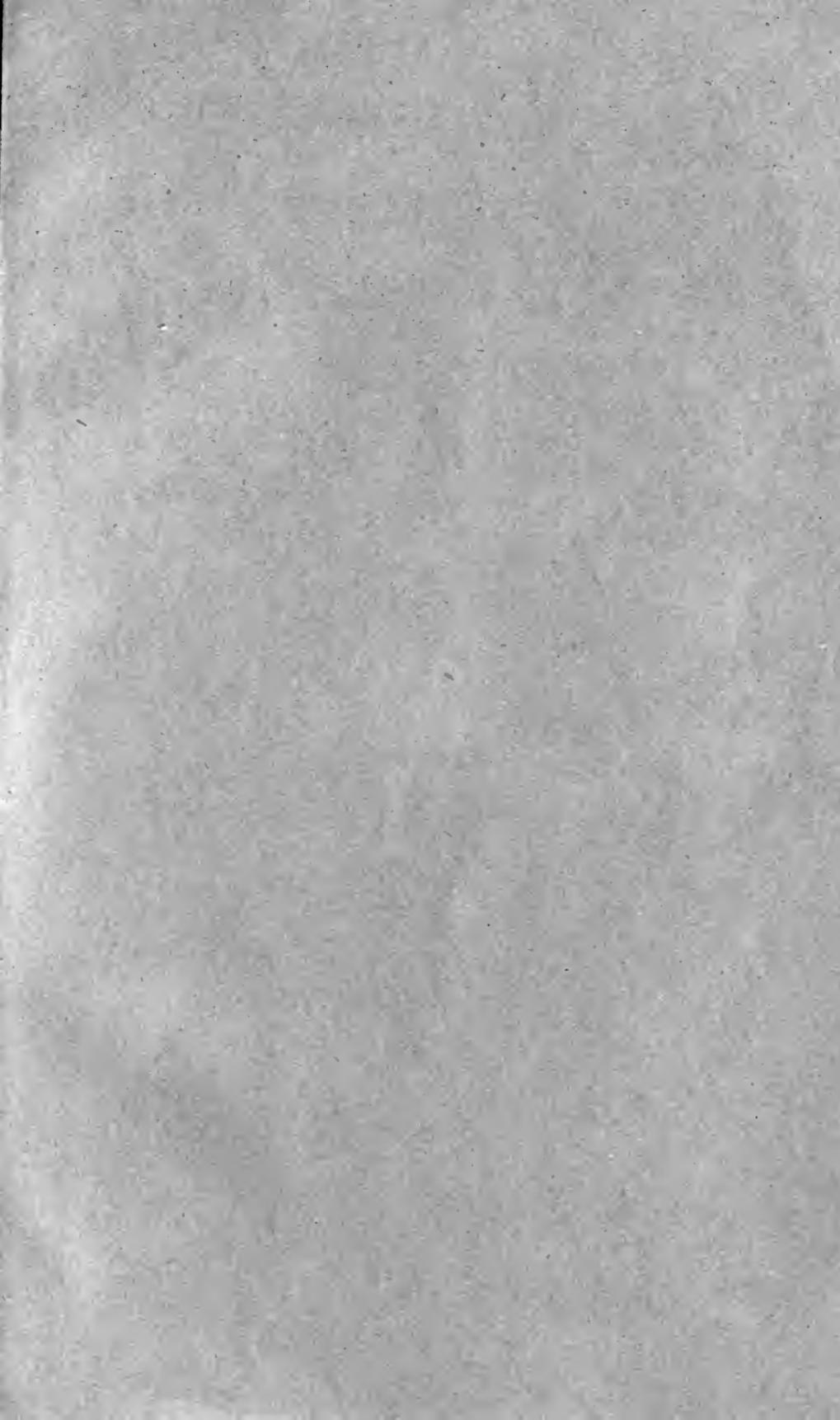


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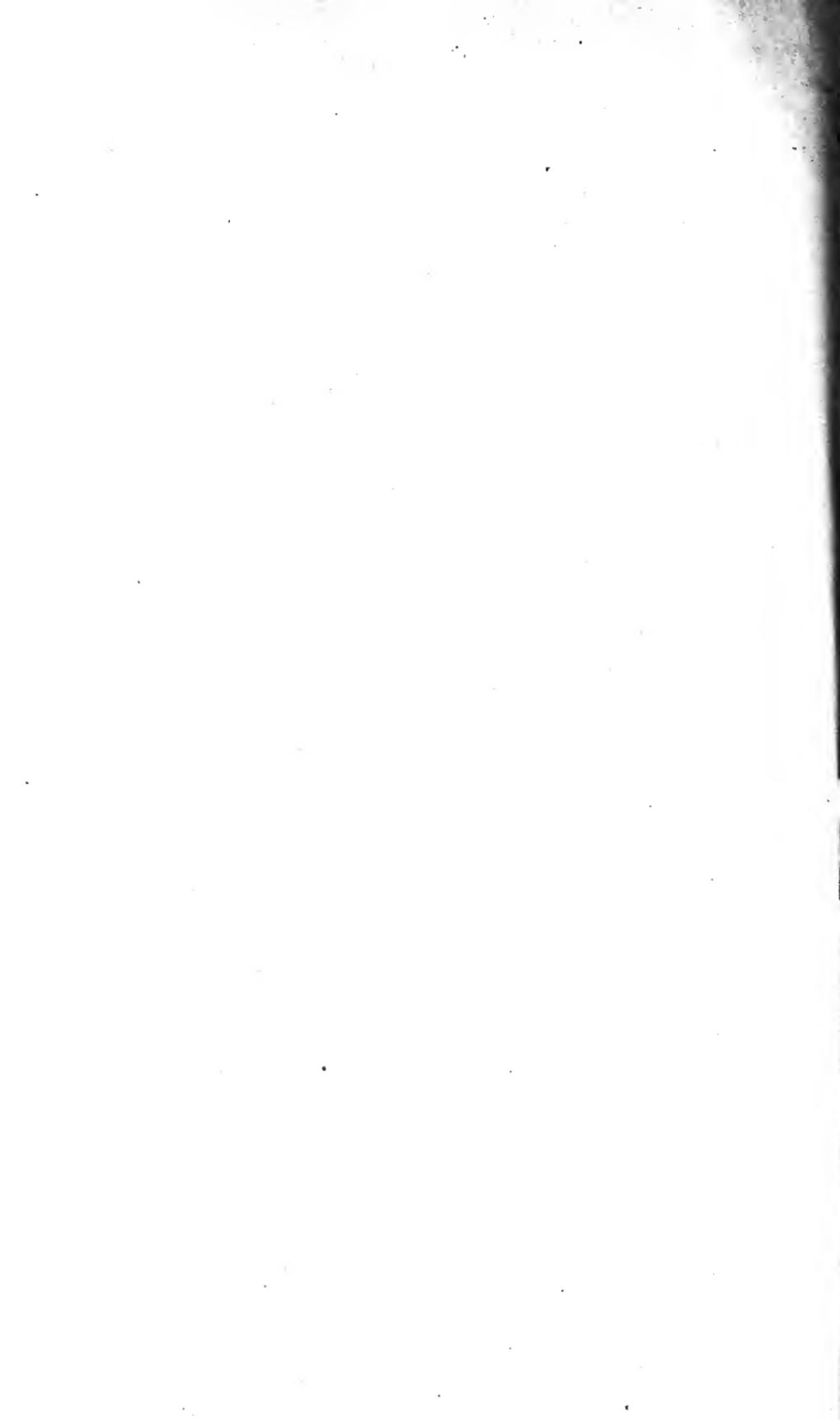


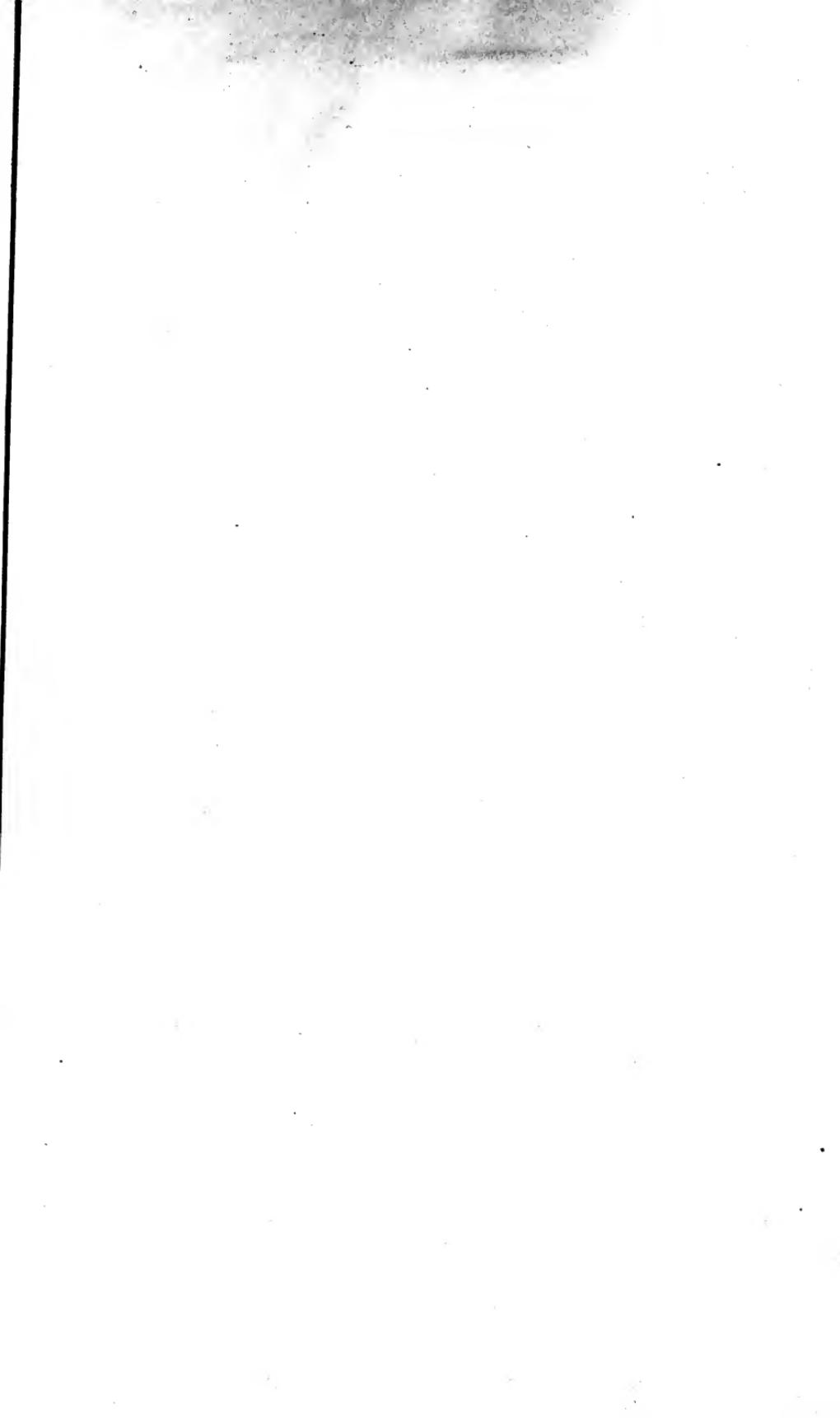












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